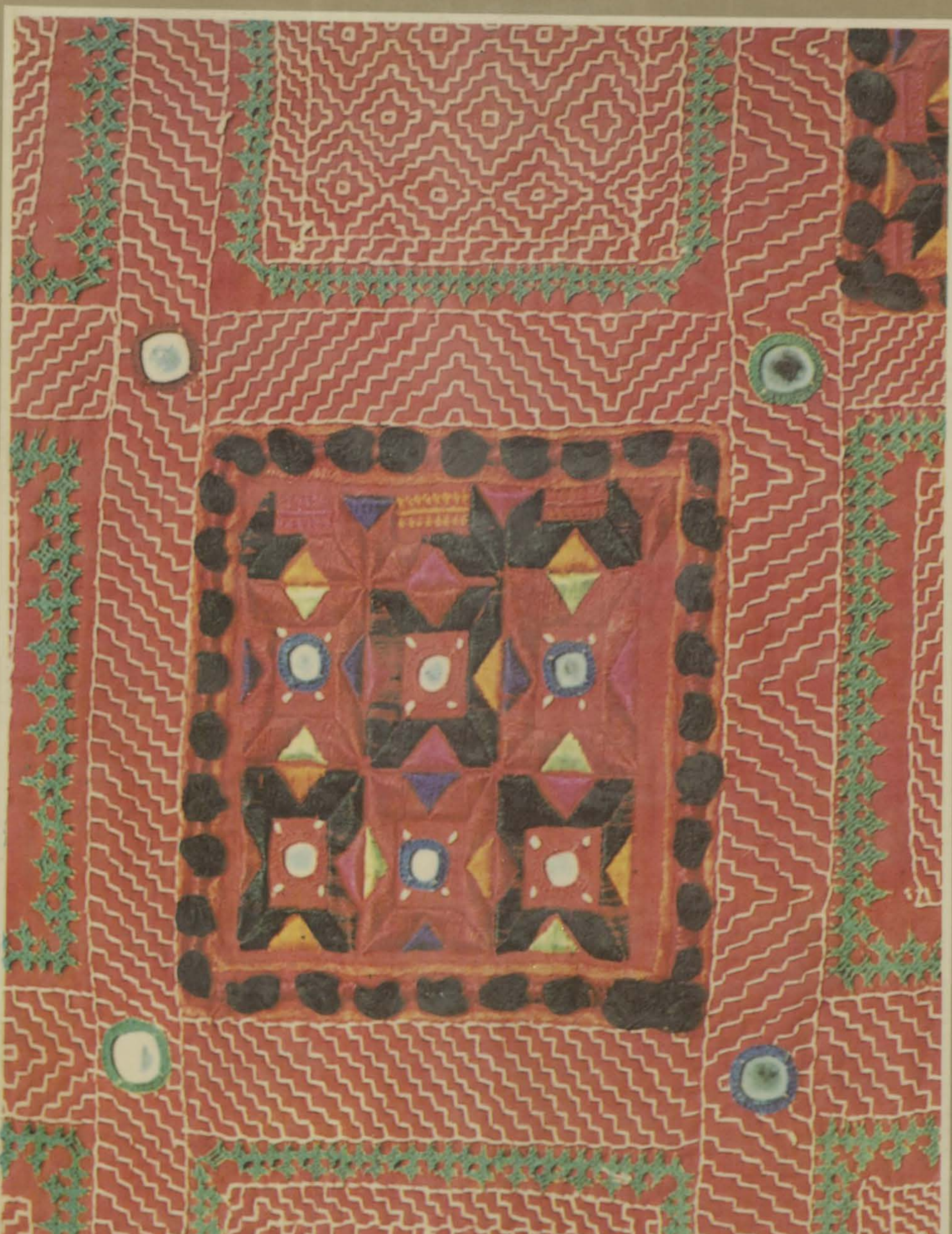
ART OF SIND



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ART OF SIND

Dr. Ghulam Ali Allana

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MY SPIRITUAL LEADER
HIS HIGHNESS
SHAH KARIM AL-HUSAINI
THE AGA KHAN,
with whose blessings
I have always been graced

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Foreword

I am only a student. I do not claim to be an experienced anthropologist. Whatever I have learnt is a result of my own interest, and in an informal way. I have had opportunities to meet trained scholars of anthropology when they visited the Institute of Sindhology, University of Sind, which I have the honour of establishing and where I worked as its Professor Incharge for more than 20 years. I also met these scholars during my visits abroad. I saw them doing their work, and whenever I had a chance, I collected relevant research material. Above all, my own curiosity took me to the remotest areas of Sind where I lived with the people as one of them.

I have also learnt a lot from my own experience while collecting the material for "The Anthropological Research Centre" of the Institute of Sindhology. I used to note the points which came to my mind during my field work. I used to discuss these points with my friends like Mr. Ali Nawaz Phulpoto and Miss Mussarat Mirza of Department of Fine Arts, University of Sind, and Sayid Zafar Kazmi, Director, Sind Museum, Hyderabad Sind, and many others. I then decided to collect these notes and compile them in the form of the present work.

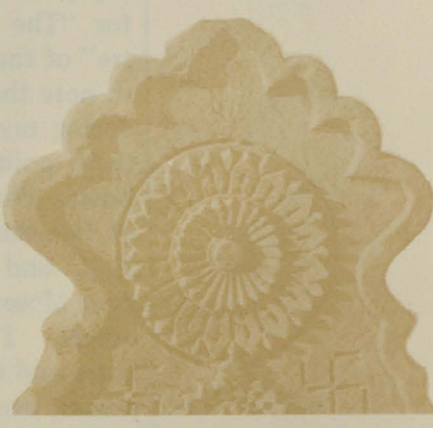
I still remember an observation made by Dr. Knez, a renowned anthropologist of the Smithsonian Institute, Washington D.C. He said: "If you will start collecting the objects for your museum right now, you will be doing a great service to your province, for now things are changing very rapidly here." Dr. Knez was quite right in his observations. I have found great changes in the patterns, motifs and designs etc., in our folk art and craft. The impact of socio-economic conditions; adaptation to a western life style; influence of the Mass-media, use of modern equipment such as the transistor, radio, television and V.C.R.; and construction of metalled roads, the use of automobiles etc., have affected the daily life and way of living of the people of Sind, and their socio-economic and socio-cultural conditions tremendously. These have also influenced the Arts and Crafts of this part of Pakistan. I, therefore, decided to collect and compile the material available to me in the present book, along with my views and comments, and submit it before the native, as well as foreign scholars, in order to invite their attention towards this field of studies.

I have already confessed that my approach to the subject is a layman's. I do not claim that this is a scholarly work. This book contains an introduction of the study of art in Sind, the culture of the Indus Valley, its rites, rituals and superstitions which are still practiced by most of the people of the Indus Valley. It is for the scholars to devote their time to a thorough study of the aspects enlisted and touched upon in this work.

It is also confessed that justice has not been done to the subject discussed here. However the main aim was to draw the attention of scholars to the school of Art of the Indus Valley which has continued till the present. People have retained all branches of varied art forms through the generations, and these will, in all probability be retained by the generations to come.

This book is a result of collaborative effort. First of all, I would like to express my indebtedness to all those scholars from whose works I have taken help in preparing the manuscript. In this connection I am grateful to my friend Dr. Louis Flam from South Carolina, who was Honorary Director Anthropological and Enthnological Research Centre, Institute of Sindhology. He has gone through every word of this manuscript, corrected it, and finally edited it, in order to make it pressworthy.

I am also grateful to Mr. Mazhar ul Islam, Director, National Institute of Folk Heritage with whom I met incidentally. I was very impressed by the knowledge he has. We discussed Sind's culture, literature and many other aspects of Sindhological Studies. We met again at the same place without any appointment. When I informed him that I had written a book on the subject which was discussed in these two meetings, he expressed his eagerness and convinced me that the said book should be handed over to him for publication by Lok Virsa. I had to accept his offer as it was recommended by a common friend who was the cause of our meeting. I am really grateful to him for the trouble he has taken in getting approval from the Board of Directors for the Publication of my work. I am also



grateful to Mr. Ilyas, my Private Secretary for his help in typing some portions of the book.

I am grateful to Mrs. Razia Abbas for her valuable suggestions in arranging various photographs to illustrate the text of this work.

In the end I would request scholars/experts to contact me if they need any point to be discussed or reviewed. I will learn a lot from their comments.

This work is actually a labour of love for the glorious, ancient and present civilization of the Indus Valley, its people, its land and every corner of it. I hope the labour I have invested in this book will be beneficial to every reader.

Ghulam Ali Allana



History of the Art of Sind and Mythology of its Signs and Symbols

The word "Art", as defined by Jean Anne Vincente, usually refers to the so called "fine arts" - pictorial, plastic and building - and to the so called "minor arts" - the everyday useful, applied and "decorative" arts.[1] The word art is derived from "arte", the craft guides of the Italian Renaissance, when "arte" denoted craftsmanship, skill, mastery of form, and the association that exists between form and ideals, and between techniques and material. The term art, therefore, carries with it an obligation not to imitate nature but rather to enrich it, and art serves as a technical and creative record of human needs and achievements.[2] We can claim that art, any art, over and above its many and varied characteristics, is a means of communication, a means of contact between the artist and the outside world. Communication with whom? With spirits, the souls of the dead; the gods, nature, animals, and rocks? The artist is often reluctant to say that he is addressing other human beings. But even in these cases art is, by definition, a message that one individual conveys to others.[3]



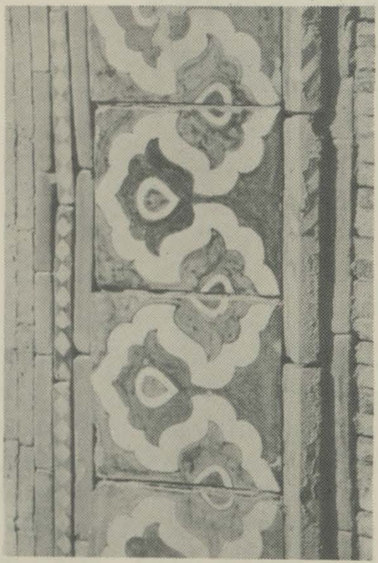
(1) Jean Anne Vincente, *History of Art,* New York, Barnes and Noble, INC, 1955 P.XV.

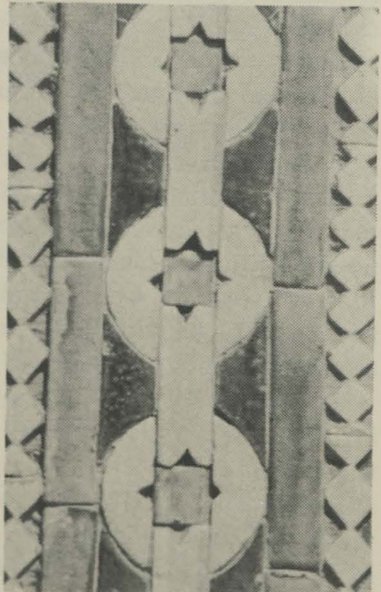
(2) Ibid.

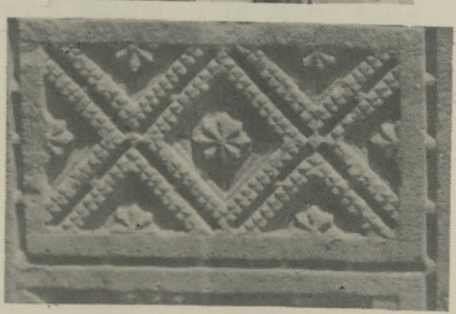
(3) Emmanuel Anati, "The Origin of Art", an article published in *Museum,* Quarterly Review, Vol: XXXIII, No. 4, UNESCO, 1981, P. 209.

Style

Having defined art, it is necessary to understand the meaning and definition of style. Style may be defined as the whole body of work produced by a given people at a given time. Style of the past is more apparent than style of the present, simply because time permits a perspective which makes it possible to see an epoch as a unified whole. The different kinds of styles within a given age may be based upon national lines, where art is affected by the political, economic and social character of the people and the epoch. There may be regional differences in style owing to geographical and geological conditions (affecting materials used in art); or to isolation, where local traditions, conditions, or habits of thought are rigorously observed because of ignorance, fear, or indifference to other ways.







In an age, such as the *proto-Renaissance*, when new ideas were being tested and old traditions still had vitality, several distinct styles, in addition to personal idiosyncrasies or the "hand writing" of individual artists, flourished side by side. Probably style in any epoch is most easily seen in pure ornament, in furniture, in costume, for these are abstract arts without content, having only instrumental limitations. According to Jean Vincente, an artist unconsciously expresses the age in which he or she lives.[4]

Art is an expression of man, a language to convey a meaning. In addition, art can be viewed as the indigenous creation of rural folk. Arts and crafts tell us something: about nature, something about life. They are the result of centuries of patient experiments of men under many circumstances. "Indeed the world of art and craft is immense", says

(4) Jean Anne Vincente, Op. Cit. P. XVII





Abraham, "what we know of customs, beliefs and culture of man throughout centuries, has come to us from surviving works of art and crafts which lie scattered like a crystal bowl thrown on marble. One has to collect particularly these stray pieces to study and to know how arts and crafts developed in a particular era".[5]

"Let us take good care", said Gylua Juhasz, one of the most famous Hungarian poets of the early twentieth century. He says:

> "The people who sing, the people who create myths, the women who draw pictures and the men who carve wood and bone, do not become extinct, for their extinction would mean the end of man-kind. Let us collect, preserve and disseminate their works. Let us learn from them. Let their art which is as permanent as nature and continuous as history, become a part of our own living soul".[6]

For the artisans of the fifth century B.C., Panini used the word 'Shilpa' as a generic word to include painters, dancers, musicians, weavers, potters and tailors. The word for the artisans was 'Kari', a word which became synonymous with skill. From the earliest times, art traditions in the Indian sub-continent have known varied directions. Panini mentions 'raj shilpins' as the artisans who created crafts for the king and his court, and the 'grama shilpins' as the village craftsmen. Five types of craftsmen were available to each village at that time. the potter, the blacksmith, the carpenter,

(5) Abraham, T.M., *Handicrafts in India*, New Delhi-5, Ranander Graphics Columbia, R. 485, New Ranjder Road, P. 2.

(6) Ka'roly Sa'ndor Kiss, *Folk art and folk artisans in Hungary*, Buddhapest, Corniva Press, 1968.

the barber and the washerman.[7] This tradition has remained in continuity to the present days.

Dr. Akbar Naqvi speaking of art says:

"In our sub-continent we have two basic traditions of art: one imperial, (of the Moghuls) which is dead; and the other folk, which may not be as vital as of yore, but which is still living".[8]

In the light of the definition given by Dr. Akbar Naqvi, the study of art - imperial as well as folk - as it developed in Sind is very necessary. Sind, as a matter of fact, is very rich in its living folk art from time immemorial. The art developed in Sind is introduced in this book as "Sindhian Art". The roots of "Sindhian Art" go back to the civilization of Mohen-Jo-Daro. We do have scattered statements and descriptions about the originality and richness of the Sindhian Art, but no serious efforts have so far been made to study the "Sindhian school of art" or the "School of art developed in Sind".

Thus, in light of the definition given by Dr. Akbar Naqvi, it can be claimed that the art which was produced or practiced by the people of Indus Valley can be termed the "Sindhian school of art" which had its roots in the folk art of the Indus Valley Civilization. The folk arts of Sind were practiced by past generations and the same traditions are being continued by the present generation, and shall be continued by future generations.



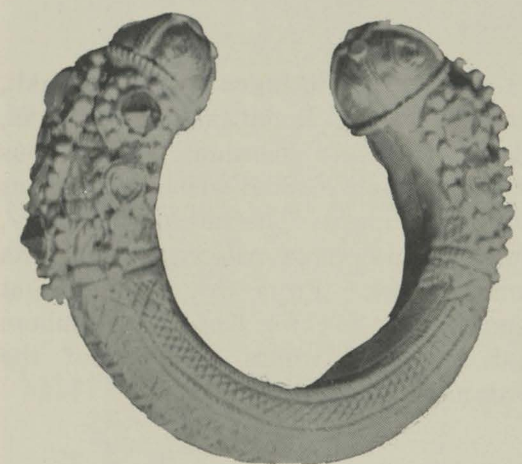
(7) Ken Barnett and Suresh Sharma, *The Indian Experience*, Hong Kong, Thomason Press, Hong Kong Ltd:, 1982, P. 85

(8) Akbar Naqvi, Dr., "Who was Alam Lohar"? an article published in daily DAWN, Karachi, Friday, July 20th, 1979.

Folk art is a major aspect of our cultural heritage and bears all the characteristics of an authentic art form. Its components have various origins, expressing the ethnic and geographical identities of various communities of Sind. Numerous migrations and local developments throughout history have led to a wealth of form, the sheer variety of which is rare in the world of Folk arts. Art has been with man since his very existence. It has been his inalienable companion in all fields of activities. His first experiments were crude. The forms were simple, designs uncouth and style coarse. But the urge for creating something of beauty was always present in him. The caravan passed the traceless centuries. The arrow points and blades were perfected. The form and designs of his utensils were improved.

Historically and archaeologically the roots of Sindhi art go back a very long way. Although heavily influenced by Iranians, Greeks, Arabs, Mughals and certain aspects of western culture, the tradition of art has continued unbroken.

Archaeological research of the 19th and early 20th century showed the roots of Sindhi village life, religion, agricultural practices and a number of traditional arts and crafts which can be traced back to the Indus Valley civilization of the third millennium B.C.



Sind has been the cradle of arts and crafts since time immemorial. The people of the Indus Valley - we yet do not know what cultural claim the Sindhis of to-day have to them - were not only great town planners, builders, engineers and masons, but they were also expert potters, goldsmiths, jewellers, musicians and lapidaries.[9]

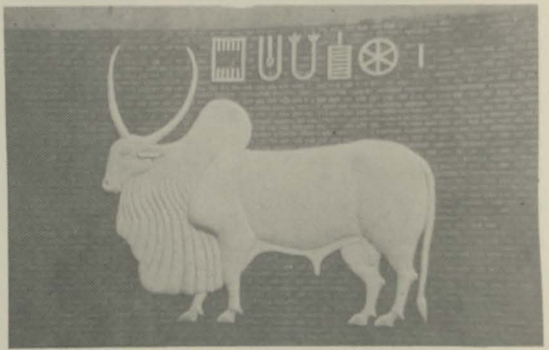
The political, cultural and historical destiny of Sind was shapped by its geographical location at the crossroads between Rajasthan, Punjab and Baluchistan. Over the centuries, this land has been the home of various people, the breeding-ground of major civilization and the meeting-point of numerous migrations. A rich and varied cultural heritage has thus been handed down.

(9) Adrain Duarte Dr. The Crafts and Textiles of Sind and Baluchistan, Jamshoro, Institute of Sindhology, 1982, P. 13.

From the old cities of Thatta, Makli, Rohri, Aror, Brahmanabad, Sehwan, Mahem-Toor and Mansurah it is obvious that the people of Sind were great patrons of arts and crafts. The rulers, particularly, built and decorated palaces, tombs, forts and mosques. From the excavations at Amri, Mohen-Jo-Daro, Kot Diji, Bhambore and Mansurah comes evidence of the patronage of the art of Sind.

In addition to the influence of Islamic culture, the artisans of Sind were particularly encouraged by early trade relations with the countries lying both East and West. The Phoenicians were an early people who traded with Sind. In 975 B.C. Hiram, King of Tyre, sent his fleet of ships of Tarshis from Exion Geber at the head of the Gulf of Akaba in the Red Sea to fetch ivory, apes and peacocks to decorate the temple of Solomon, king of Jerusalem.[10]

In the north lay the oldest road in the world, connecting Western China to Syria and Eastern Europe. Caravans with merchants, monks, pilgrims and craftsmen, carrying myth, icon and artifact meandered over the vast land spaces of Asia. This road was connected through the Himalayan passes to the sub-continent. Through the centuries, traders, craftsmen and warriors entered the sub-continent to trade or to conquer. With conquest came foreign craftsmen, new designs, vocabularies and techniques.



The tombs of Jam Nizamuddin (1461-1508 A.D.) and Darya Khān at Thatta are landmarks of the pre-Mughal period in Sind. Their architecture, proves that the rulers of Sind, even before the Mughals, were great lovers of art. As a matter of fact, as the noted historian Toynbee has mentioned, Sind was much influenced by Islamic art[11] from the early days of Muslim rule in India. Muslim craftsmen developed the strength and energy for an intensive study of various problems concerning ornament and decoration. Whether in a carpet or a shawl, or on the face of a brass bowl, the most outstanding feature is the exquisite and intricate ornamental design.

(10) Srimati Akshaya Kumari Devi, *The Evolution of the Rigvedic Pantheon*, Calcutta, Bijaya Krishna Brothers, 1938.

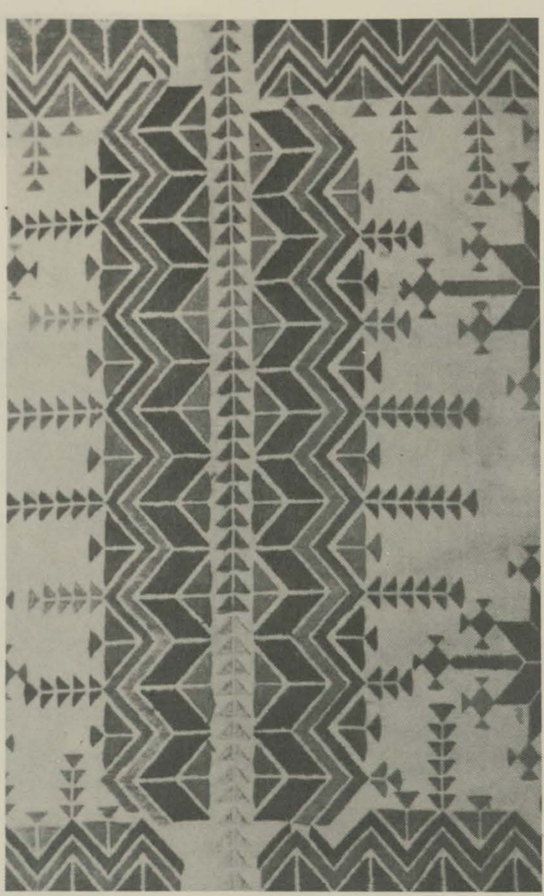
(11) Srimati Akshaya Kumari Devi, The Evolution of the *Rigvedic Pantheon*, Calcutta, 1938. *Also see:*
Khan, F.A., *Bhambore Excavations*, Karachi, Department of Archaeology and Museums, Government of Pakistan, 1976, P. 17.

During the Arghuns and Tarkhans rule (1521-1555) and thereafter, Mughal rule in Sind, Persian artists, artisans and craftsmen migrated from Iran and settled in Sind. Thus, Sind was influenced by Persian art and culture. Persian elements were also combined with local style.[12]

The Mughals, though, were great patrons of arts and crafts but their contribution to the art of the Sind was little. The Shahjehan Mosque at Thatta is one of the few buildings which were constructed under the orders of Mughal kings. The Mughals no doubt initiated a Renaissance of classical art of the sub-continent and united the then existing traditions. The new art forms reached their peak in the 17th century and has been acclaimed as the tradition of "Mughal art".[13]

The classical craft tradition had flowered around the kings and their courts, and the temples built by kings to glorify the gods. Craftsmen had inherited a technical mastery of tools and material that was the genius of the people of the Indus Valley. Within the craft tradition, the artisan community with its guilds had taken shape. Great schools of hereditary craftsmen flourished. Knowledge was communicated from father to son, from master to disciple. The craftsman was both designer and master builder. The division between fine arts and crafts had no validity. Craft guilds occupied a unique position in the social, economic and religious life of the community.

With the establishment of Mughal rule in India, new elements were introduced into the consciousness of the craftsman and his relationship with his material and tools. In the royal textile workshops, with the introduction and assimilation of Islamic influence, aesthetics turned to flowers and fruit of a more temperate climate.[14]



The rural or folk (لوک) craft idiom was based on the vernacular forms of the artisans guild. It was an art that was not concerned with imitation. Rural art forms were precise and free of the inessential. It was as if the peasant craftsman saw directly into the heart of the object.[15]

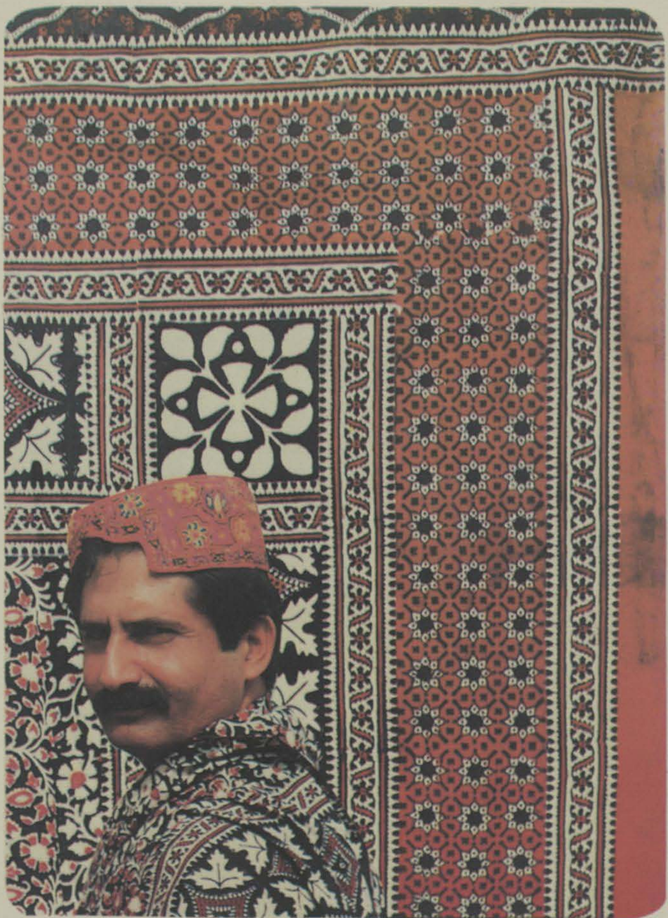
(12) Threadlines Pakistan, Ministry of Industries, Karachi, Government of Pakistan, 1977, P. 19.

(13) *Threadlines Pakistan,* Op. Cit, P. 19.

(14) Ken Barnalt & Suresh Sharma, *The Indian Experience,* Op. Cit, P. 85.

(15) Ken Barnalt & Suresh Sharma, Op. Cit, P. 85.

Scope of the art of Sind



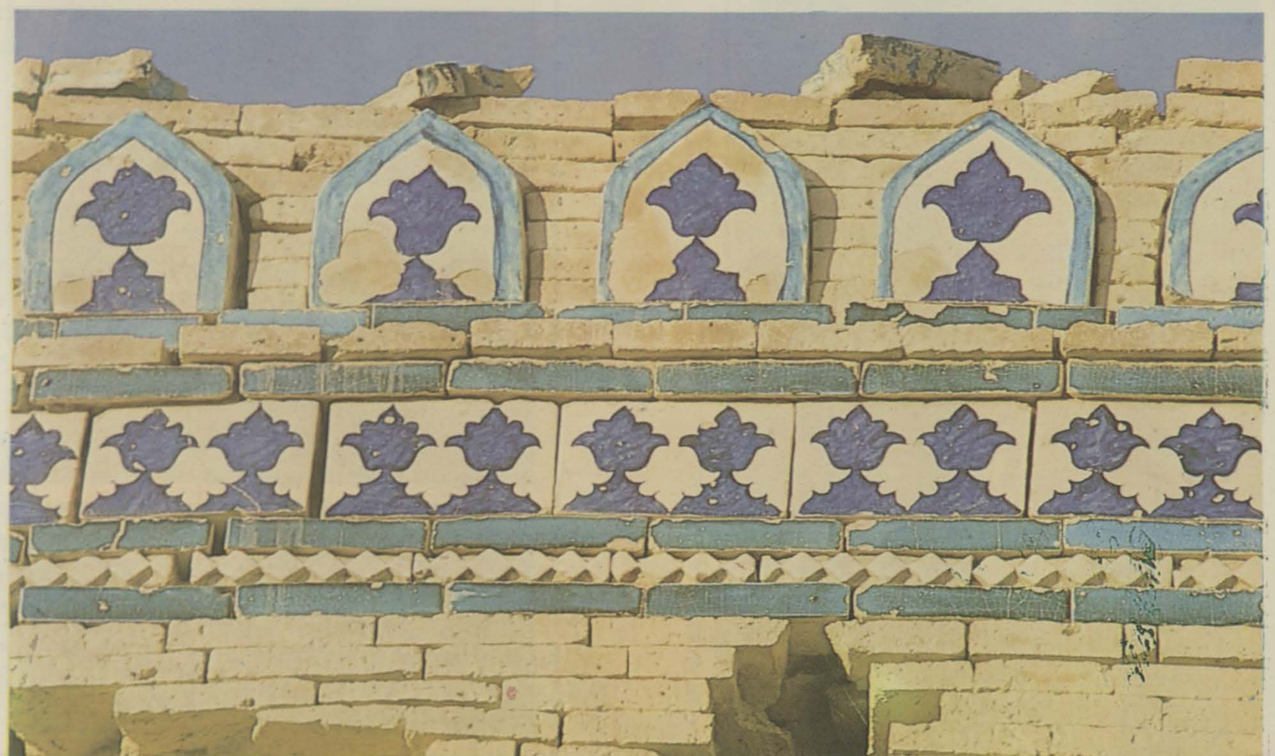
In its wider sense folk art includes arts and crafts, poetry, music and dancing. In its more restricted sense it embraces the art of making things, the "instinctive" artistic ability that creates something outstanding in domestic crafts, in other words, folk decorative art. Folk decorative art is a blend of materials, processing techniques, implements and decorative styles that are determined by economic, historical, geographical and climatic factors. These factors exert and influence singly as well as in combined form.

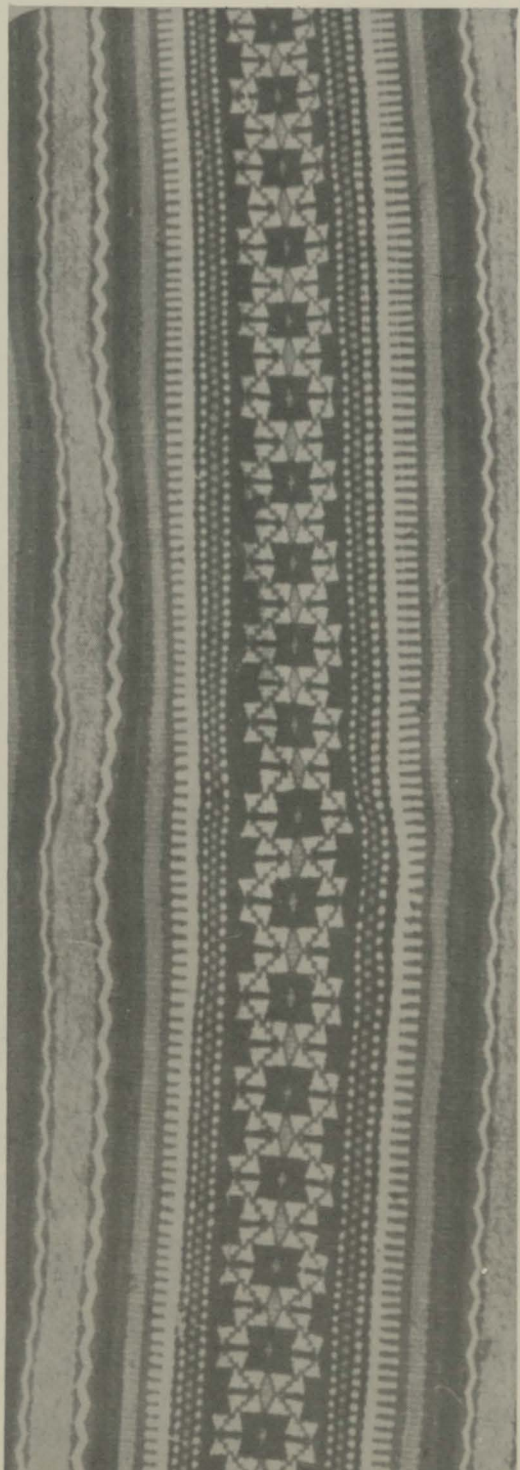
In the lower Indus Valley, this art has become the specific form of experience of rural communities. It reflects the tastes and desire of the people of remote farmsteads and villages. It is a collective art for the form, decoration, colours and design of its objects. The characteristic, basic feature of popular decorative art in every age was the suitability of the material used. Thus a harmony of material, form, decoration, colours and designs developed in the objects of folk culture; in the clothes worn for festivals everyday occasions, bed-covers, objects of use, tools and implements, dwelling houses and huts, in buildings and furniture. Popular taste determined the richness of forms, motifs and pattern in decorative art, from which the individual artist drew his/her inspiration and enabled him/her to make a more original, useful and attractive object. On the other hand, experience, insight and expressive ability of the individual artist also contributed to the enrichment of the tradition, as new techniques and styles progressed.

Though certain elements suggest common origins of these styles, yet the decorative motif compositions and patterns, the colouring of the work of weavers, spinners and women's embroidery are varied in their artistic traditions. Their art differs from one region and ethnic unit of Sind to another. The forms and decorative expressions of these ethnic units have, however, remained in tact and they can still

be clearly distinguished. From the study of various patterns of the art of Sind, it can be established that this art has its roots in the land before any idea of Mughal art was initiated. Mughal art did not dominate the art of Sind, i.e. the folk art of Sind, and the influence of Mughal art can rarely be observed anywhere in Sind. However, some influence of Rajasthani or Gujarati art can be traced in local Sindhi architecture and paintings. But the art of the Sind flourished and established its own sources and traditions.







In this way for instance, the Thari embroidery from the vicinity of Mithi and Umerkot, and the Baluchi needle work of Jacobabad and its neighbourhood, and the Kohistani embroidery of Thano Bula Khan, Seri and Karchat are recognizably different in composition and colour designs. They may be of common origin but the use of the basic material including the decorative cotton cloth is not the same.

A long historical progress preceded the development of the characteristic styles and techniques of processing material used in Sindhian popular decorative art. The tools and implements employed in their making were also the result of a long historical process. This development can be traced back to the Iranian, Greek, Mongol and Arab influences. We do not have any written evidence of the source of folk art of earlier times. A few scattered fragments suggest a nomadic way of life.



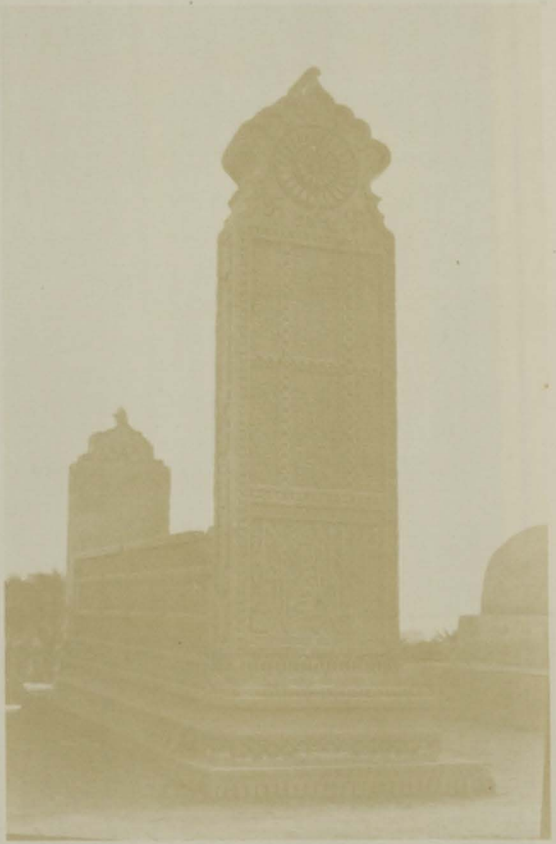
The Greek, Iranian and Arab influence can be seen on Sindhi folk art, particularly in the decoration of glazed pottery, tiles, embroidery, and carving on stone and wood.

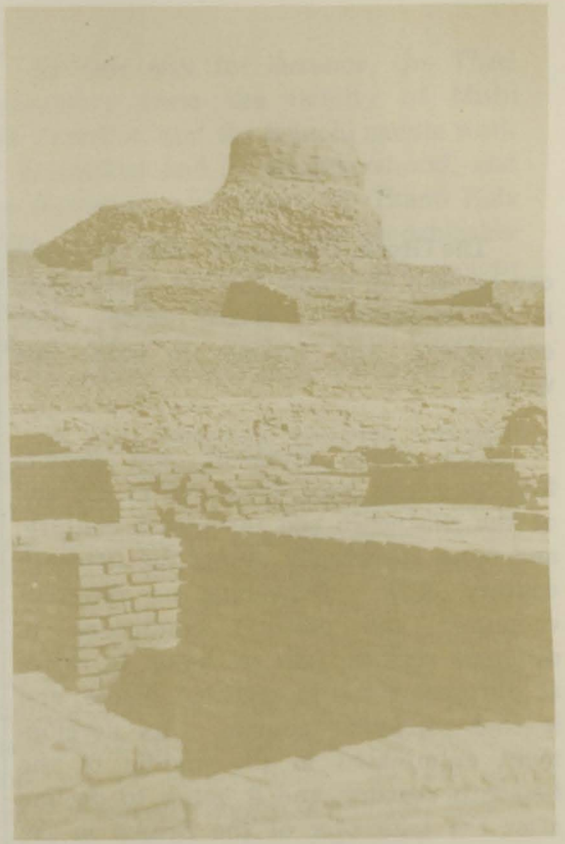
The more prevalent and general folk art styles were developed at the end of the thirteenth and fourteenth century, and more specifically during the fifteenth century A.D. Depending on different economic and cultural conditions in different regions, folk art began to thrive at different times in different places, and it took different courses. Its development culminated in the middle of the fifteenth century, and it began to decline after the take over of the British in the 19th century. It flourished again in it full splendour after Independence in 1947, when it began to benefit from generous subsidies from the Government.

Types And Sources Of The Art Of Sind

The term fine arts is conventionally used to designate those arts which are concerned with line, colour and form (painting, sculpture and architecture) and with sound (music). The various kinds of art of the Indus Valley can be enumerated as: architecture, sculpture, glazed and simple pottery, painting, music, lacquer work, textiles (printing, tie and dye work, weaving and embroidery), carving on stone and wood, calligraphy, engraving, inlaying, jewellery and other minor arts. They can appeal to our eyes, imagination, feelings, emotions and a developed aesthetic sense.







The material discovered from the excavation of Amri, Mohen-Jo-Daro, Kot Diji, Chanhu-Jo-Daro, Depar Gangro, Khau-Jo-Daro (at Mirpur Khas), Bhambore and from the observation of Chaukundi, Makli, Sonda, and Miyun Wahyun grave yards and from the mosques and shrines at Thatta, Sehwan, Hyderabad, Rohri, Thul (near Johi), Khudabad, and Gori-Jo Mandir one can claim that Sind had a glorious past. A new term "the art of the Sind", for the art developed in Sind has been devised to differentiate it from Mughal Art.

The dating of the art of Sind is not an easy task. The sites and centres situated deep in the remote areas have not yet been studied thoroughly. The excavation of Amri, Kot Diji, Mohen-Jo-Daro, Chanhu-Jo-Daro and Mansurah have proved that the Indus Valley was very rich in art, and folk art. These excavations proved the high skill of craftsmanship of the inhabitants of this region. Household utensils plain and painted pottery prepared with the help of the wheel, terra-cotta dice and chessmen, copper weapons and implements, copper models of a two wheeled cart, gold and silver bangles, ear ornaments, necklesses and other jewellery are some of the many artistic things found at these ancient cities in Sind.[16] Sir John Marshall, commenting on jewellery found by him from Mohen-Jo-Daro said:

(16) Wheeler, M. *The Indus Civilization*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1972, PP. 86–106.

"So well finished and so highly polished that they might have come out of a Bond Street jewellery of today rather than from a pre-historic house of 5000 years ago."[17]

Excavations in 1932 at the ruins of Babylonain in the Elamite village of Tell Asmar (near Baghdad), unearthed pottery, seals and beads which, according to Dr. Henri Frankfort and Marshall, were imported from Mohen-Jo-Daro in ca. 2000 B.C. Quoting Childe, Abraham states:

"Judging by the domestic architecture, the seal cutting and grace of pottery, the Indus Valley civilization was ahead of Babylon at the beginning of 3rd Millennium B.C."[18]

From excavations conducted in different parts of Sind, it is obvious that handicrafts flourished in the towns and villages from a very early period of history. There were independent artisans who owned small shops and employed a number of paid and un-paid apprentices.

(17) John Marshall, *Excavation of Mohen-Jo-Daro*, P. 44.

(18) Abraham, T.M., *Handicrafts in India*, Op. Cit.





The most monumental examples of the art of the Indus Valley Civilization are the stone and bronze sculptures. There are some 'minor' works which include the most remarkable of the authenticated Indus figurines, the dancing girl.[19]

The large number of terra-cotta figurines are characteristic of the Indus Valley Civilization in all known periods. Nearly three-quarters of the terra-cottas represent cattle, normally humped bulls, although the short-horn bull and the buffalo also occur. Strangely, cows are never represented. Other animals include the dog, sheep (rarely), elephant, rhinoceros, pig, monkey, turtle and indeterminate birds.[20] Small model carts of terra-cotta with solid wheels have been noted as a characteristic feature of the Indus Valley Civilization.[21]

(19) John Marshall, Op. Cit, P. 44.

(20) Wheeler, M. *The Indus Civilization*, Cambridge, Op. Cit, 1968, P. 98.

(21) Ibid, PP. 69 and 86.





The sculpture that claims the most notice is the bronze dancing girl. This is a small figurine of rather fine workmanship with disproportionately long arms and legs.[22] Another sculpture of a male figure is done in alabaster is 11½" high, with arrangements of clothing that has been described as "a thin kilt-like garment fastened round the waist, partly covered by a shawl of thin material, worn over the left shoulder and under the right arm".[23]

The people of Mohen-Jo-Daro were good craftsmen. Their most notable artistic achievement was in their seal engravings, especially those of animals.[24] These seals generally depict animals, such as the bull, buffalo, goat, tiger and elephant. Wheeler considers this art an outstanding feature of the people of Mohen-Jo-Daro. He says:

> "It would be no exaggeration to describe them as little masterpieces of controlled realism, with a monumental strength in one sense out of all proportion to their size and in another entirely related to it".[25]

Equally interesting are some of the human figurines. Most striking of the figurines is perhaps the bronze "dancing girl". Naked but for a necklace and series of bangles almost covering one arm, her hair is dressed in a complicated coiffure, and she stands in a provocative posture, with one arm on her hip and one lanky leg half bent.

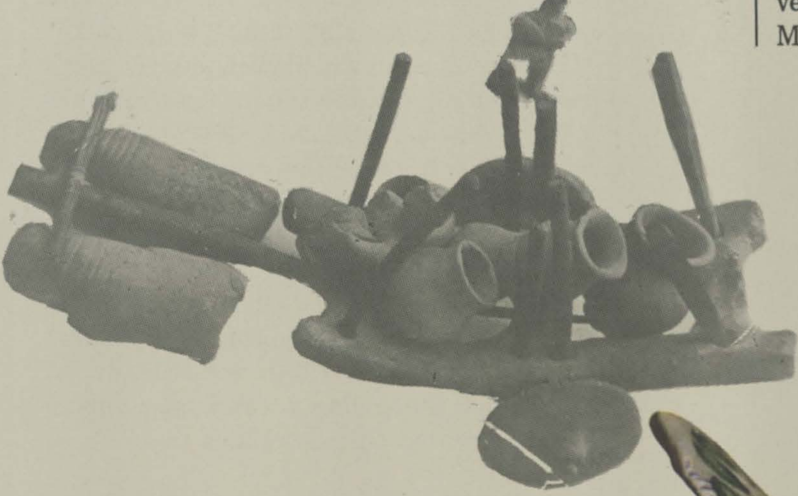
(22) Wheeler, M. Op. Cit, P. 87.
Also see: John Marhsall, Vol: 1, P. 356.

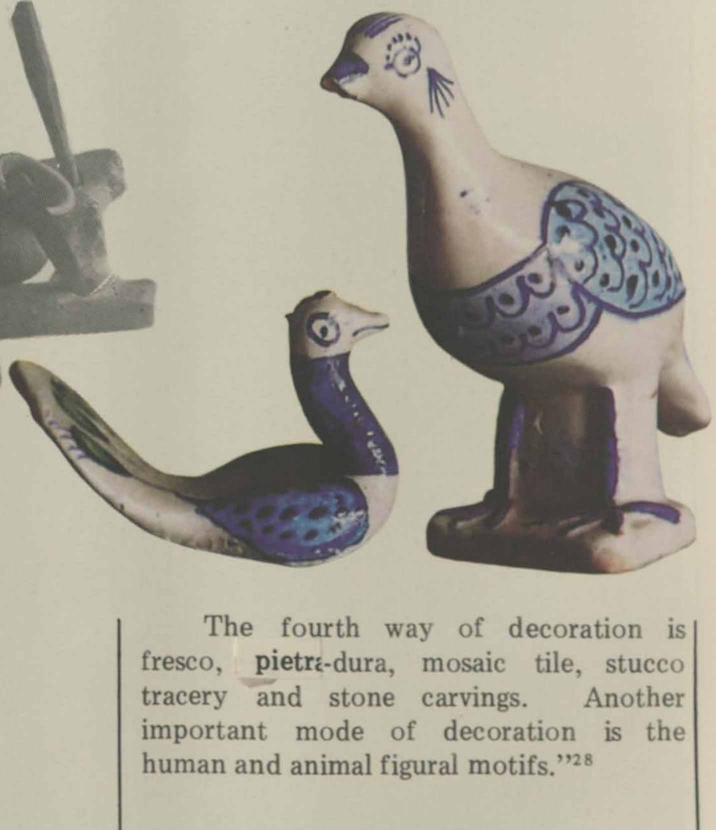
(23) Basham, A.L., *The Wonder That Was India*, London, Sidgwick and Jackson, 1961, P. 20

(24) Wheeler, M. Op. Cit, P. 101.

(25) Basham, A.L. Op. Cit, P. 21.

The people of Mohen-Jo-Daro made brilliantly naturalistic models of animals, especially charming being the tiny monkeys and squirrels used as pinheads and beads. For their children they made cattle with movable heads, model monkeys which slide down a string, little toy carts, and whistles shaped like birds, all of terra-cotta. They also made rough terra-cotta statues of women, usually naked or nearly naked, but with elaborate head-dresses. These certainly were icons of the mother goddess, and are so numerous





that they seem to have been kept in nearly every home.[26] There are a few examples of bearded bud men with coiled hair[27] in terra-cotta.

Sindhi artists were masters of decorative patterns and designs. They depicted their themes and designs in paintings, ceramics, carvings, textiles (block-printings), glazed and painted pottery, lacquer work and embroidery. Some of these patterns and designs consist of geometrical, floral, figural and calligraphic motifs.

In view of Shaikh Khurshid Hassan: "The first of these ornamentation is geometrical patterns in the shape of rectangles, squares, meanders and circles, etc. The second is floral designs in different aspects of art, for instance in ceramics, plain and printed pottery, carvings, lacquer work, embroidery, weaving, block-printing, etc. These designs depict plant leaves and flowers of lotus, pipil tree, Tulsi plant and sun flower. The third is the art of calligraphy, Quranic verses and triumphal inscriptions intended to explain the functions of the buildings, and to perpetuate the memory of the founders, were used in abundance. The inscriptions played a very significant role in the decoration of Muslim buildings.

The fourth way of decoration is fresco, pietra-dura, mosaic tile, stucco tracery and stone carvings. Another important mode of decoration is the human and animal figural motifs."[28]

(26) Basham, A.L., Op. Cit, P. 21.
Also see: Wheeler, Op. Cit, P. 91.

(27) Ibid, pp. 86–88.

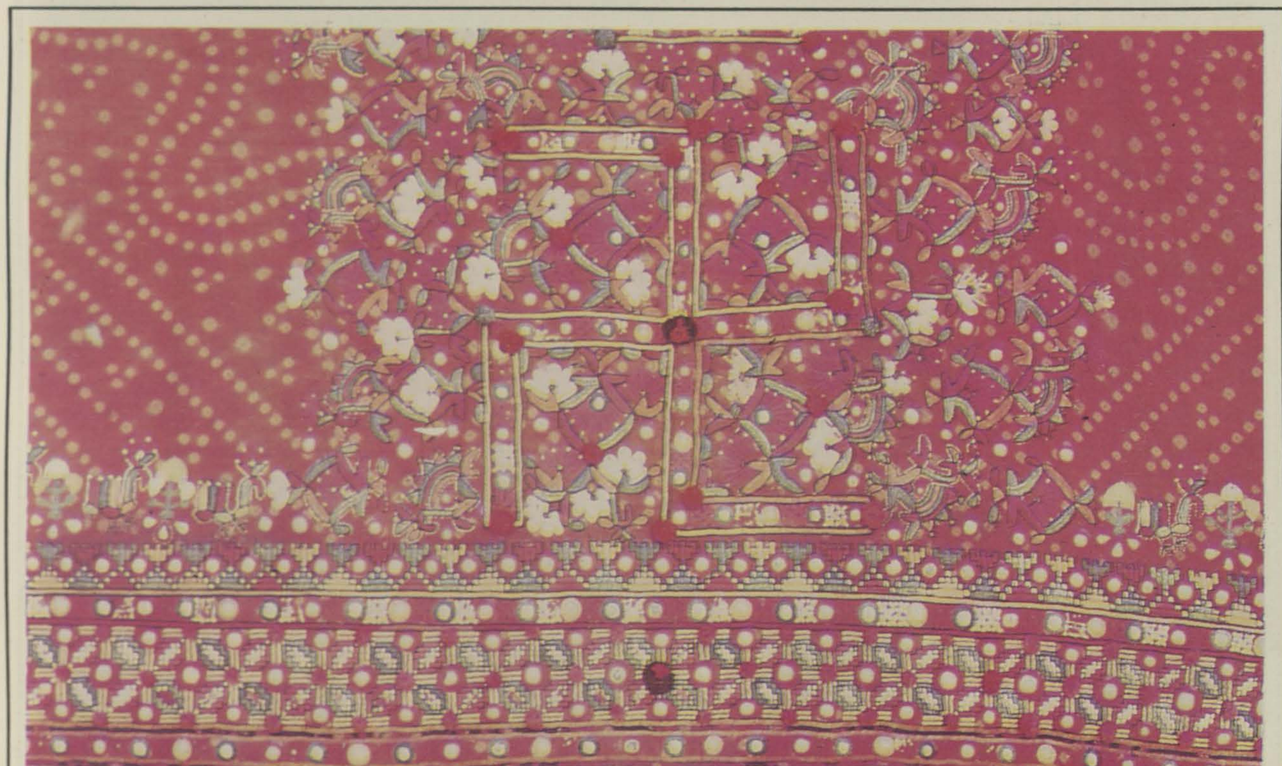
(28) Shaikh Khurshid Hassan, "Decorative art" a paper published in Archaeology of Sind, Karachi, 1975.

Favourite Colours of the People of Sind

Colour is life. "All the arts of Sind are colourful, some of them gaudily so" says Dr. Duarte. In his view: "Colour is woven into cloth, or printed on it. Colour is embroidered on silk or leather. Colour is pressed on wood, or painted and stencilled on pottery and tiles. All taste is partly a question of the people themselves, and partly a question of the country they live in. Primitive people, gifted with a bright sunny disposition have an almost childish love for bright gaudy hues.

The Sind countryside is drab and colourless. The only hues that relieve its dull and monotonous aspect are the fresh green of fields, the yellow of ripened corn, the crimson of sunsets, the purple and blue of hills. These hues, specially in contrast with the drab sameness of the desert are so pleasing to the eye, so satisfying to the sense that men snatch at them, as it were, and incorporate them in their arts. All the arts in Sind are picturesque and colourful arts."[29]

(29) Adrain Duarte, Dr., Op. Cit, PP. 11 and 12.



The colour combinations are typical not only in the Lower Indus Valley, in Thar and Kohistan, but of rallies in general and continue to be characteristics of all textile media of the desert region of the southern Punjab and Sind.

Black on red back-ground is a common colour scheme for painted pottery of the period of Mohen-Jo-Daro. The red colour which represented blood and life and symbolised immortality still remains a dominant colour in textile. It was typically smeared on the face of the dead of a Hindu person to ensure the after-life and is still applied on the hands of a bride and bride-groom and their relatives mostly by women-folk in Sind.

Sindhis are traditionally fond of "satrangi" (seven basic colours). Sindhi textiles and other decorative arts, there-





fore, are predominantly red, green, yellow, purple, orange, dark blue, and white,[30] but it depends upon the kind of art and the area where it is made. There is little deviation from the pure colour in village embroidery. Shocking-pink (piazi) is sometimes added essentially in the silko-satrangi suits.[31]

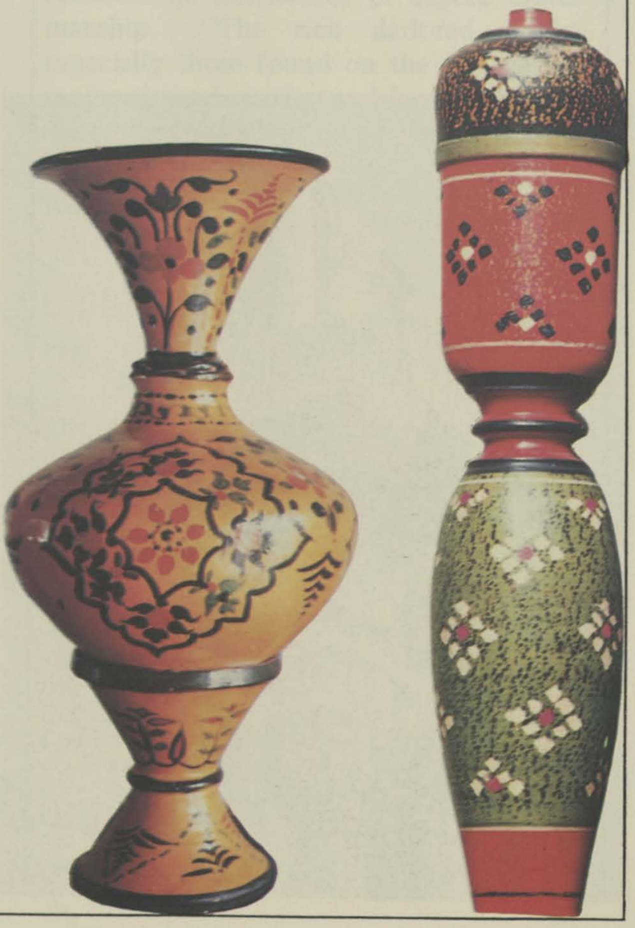
The preference for blue is said to be based upon an ancient belief where blue, a symbol of the sky and the gods, embodies metaphysical powers. This colour was dominant and is still dominant in schemes of textiles and ceramics from Multan, Nasarpur, Thatta and Halla.[32]

The fondness and choice of colours by Sindhi folk is expressed in the folklore, classical literature and ballads of Sind. Colour transforms the village hut or the earth with the painting or mystical diagrams, or the importance of palms of a woman's hand on walls to ward off evil.

(30) Ethel-Jane W. Bunting, *Sindhi Tombs and Textiles.* The persistence of pattern, The University of New Mexico, 1980, P. 58.

(31) Ethel-Jane W. Bunting, Op. Cit, P. 58.

(32) *Threadlines of Pakistan,* P. 10.



Architecture



Mounds covering the remains of pre-historic settlements and great dams of hewn stone are to be found co-adjacent in many parts of the hill country of Baluchistan and Sind. The question, whether they are to be attributed to the pre-historic civilization or more recent cultures, is one that has yet to be determined.[33] Exploratory excavation of the settlements has disclosed that they date from various periods during the third and second millennia B.C. There is no direct evidence of the age of the cyclopean works. They are built across water courses and between rocky outcrops in the valley, evidently with the object of controlling rain water for agricutlural purposes. It is in the tract adjoining the modern boundry of Sind that the most elaborate examples. Their builders, skilfully adapting their plan to topographical circumstances clearly possessed a first-rate knowledge of engineering, far beyond the capacity

(33) Lambrick, H.T., *History of Sind,* Vol: 1, Jamshoro, Sindhi Adabi Board, 1964, P. 52.

of present-day inhabitants. They — the nomadic shepherds, the unlettered tribal chiefs, — call these ponderous vestiges of a superior civilization Gabarbands, or Ghorbands, ascribing them to Ghebrs, or Zoroastrians, probably because their traditions in general do not tell of any other possessors of the land before the advent of Islam.[34]

In view of Mr. Lambrick: "The ancient races in this region were primarily pastoral, though not nomadic, and that they may have drawn a considerable proposition of their cereal supplies from elsewhere. Several of their main centres were in the vicinity of copious natural springs, affording at present day irrigation for several hundred acres of land. Almost all the others are close to running water."[35]

A great majority of the settlement of the pre-historic people who inhabited the Sind-Baluchistan border country appear to have been small villages of a predominantly pastoral community. They consisted of small rectangular houses, the foundations and usually the first few courses of walls being of good stone masonry. The superstructure may have been of rubble consolidated with gypsum or sundried mud, and the roofs of "pish" matting, possibly covered with mud, over a wooden framework.

Architecture as defined by Mr. Mohammad Ishtiaq Khan is "the art of organising space".[36] According to him, "space is organised by erection of walls and roofs creating rooms, halls, verandahs and domes. The resulting building activity is based on the environment of a country, material and skills of its people. Architecture thus reflects the progress of decadence of a people with greater excavation than any other branch of human culture" [37]

In view of Mr. Rajput, the origin of Pakistan architecture is rooted in its soil. Its origin can be traced to those mud and reed constructions that even now characterise the hempler homes in remote villages.[38]

The earliest known form of architecture culminated in the development of bronze age cities like Mohen-Jo-Daro and Harrapa. About 5000 years ago, these cities developed out of an earlier village culture which is now being traced at a number of sites in Sind and Baluchistan.[39]

Sind has been known for its brick masonry since the third millennium B.C., as seen at the pre-historic site of Mohen-Jo-Dar.[40] The bricks used in the buildings reflected an inheritance of superb craftsmanship. The rich dark-red bricks, especially those found on the surface, are made of the best clay and have such clean edges that no stone could have a sharper

(34) Lambrick, H.T., *History of Sind,* Vol: 1, Jamshoro, Sindhi Adabi Board, 1964, P. 52.

(35) Lambrick, H.T., Op. Cit, P. 56.

(36) Mohammad Ishtiaq Khan, "Mohen-Jo-Daro, Architecture and Town Planning", an article published in Mohen-Jo-Daro, Karachi, Goethe Institute, 1980, PP 9-10.

(37) Ibid.

(38) Rajput, A.B., *Architecture in Pakistan,* Karachi, Pakistan Publications, P. 1.

(39) Idrees S.M. Siddiqui, *Thatta,* Islamabad, Department of Archaeology and Museums, Ministry of Education and Scientific Research, Government of Pakistan, 1970, PP. 3 & 6.

(40) Rajput, A.B., Op. Cit, P. 1.

or truer form. The excavations at tne principal sites of Indus Valley civilisation, namely Mohen-Jo-Daro and Harrapa have revealed that these cities were laid out with astonishing forethought and care. These cities were divided in rectangular blocks of almost equal sizes and the main streets, oriented to the north-south, the lanes ran in straight lines and crossed each other at right angles.[41]

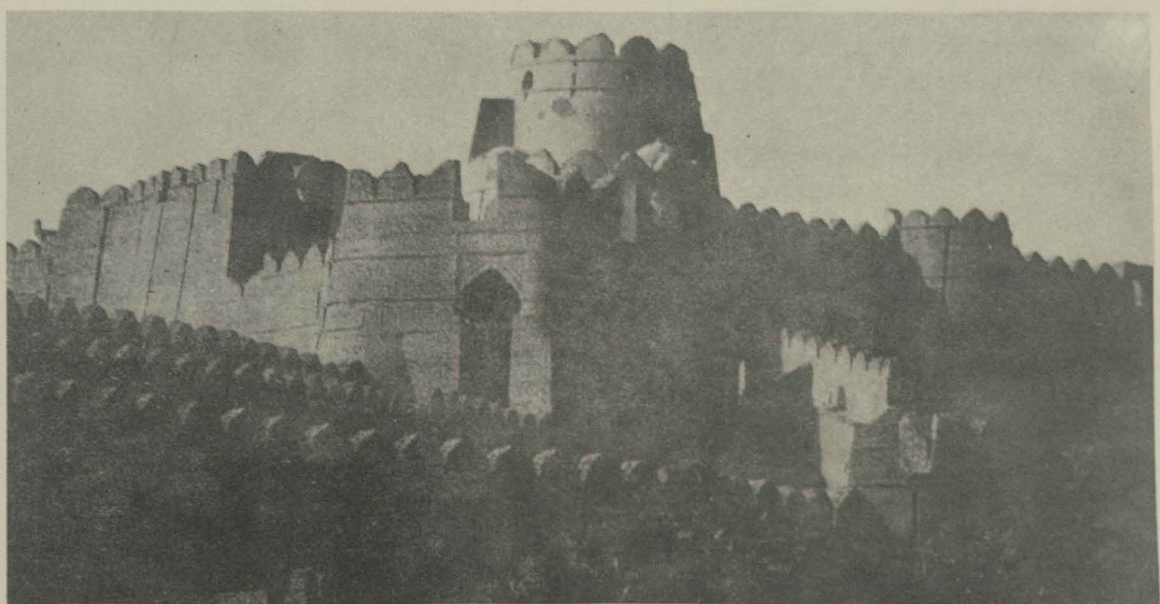
In the town planning, the drainage system adopted by the Indus people occupied a significant position. Every street had its brick-lined drainage channel and into these main drains ran smaller tributery drains from the houses on either side of the streets. They were made of burnt bricks, cemented with mud mortar.

Similarly, the remains of the Great Bath of Mohen-Jo-Daro are also very important in so far as architecture is concerned. It measures 39′ x 23′ x 8′. There are two staircases on the northern and southern sides of the Bath for the worshippers. Immediately below the foot of the northern staircase is a broad platform 16″ x 39″, intended perhaps for a safe bathing place for children.

A common house in Mohen-Jo-Daro was generally two-storied, built of burnt bricks set in clay or gypsum mortar, and possessed a typically eastern house-plan of a centrally located court surrounded by a number of rooms. Practically every house had a brick-lined well and a bathroom; the latter always placed on the street side of the building for convenient disposal of water. The walls were built with a slight batter and were mud plastered, which might also have been painted. Occasionally windows were provided in the walls when houses were built with more than one storey. Thus it can be asserted that the architecture of the Indus Civilization possessed the excellence of a high degree of technical skill in engineering.

Similarly, the architecture of Thatta houses with their wind — catchers, the Tomb of Jam Nizamuddin, Mirza Issa-I and II, Mirza Mohammad Baqi, Jan Baba and others indicate the great art of architecture of the Sindhi people. There is a local touch to their architectural art which draws the attention of experts to study this art of Sind.

(41) Mohammad Ishtiaq Khan, *Mohen-Jo-Daro, Architecture and Town Planning,* Op. Cit. P. 5.



Spinning Textile

Another famous art of Sind is spinning and weaving textile. Very few countries have as rich and dynamic a costume tradition as does Sind. In this province, more than 50 ethnic groups maintain their traditional dresses and activities, the roots of which extend 5000 years into the past, to the Indus Valley Civilization. Today's textiles reflect the unique mixture of races and cultures that make up Sind's cultural identity.

The existence of the art of cloth weaving and dyeing in the Indus Valley has been traced back to five thousand years, and has been improved by the discovery of spindle whorls, bobbins, and a dyer's workshop at Mohen-Jo-Daro.[42] Over a large part of the ancient world, cloth woven in Sind or shipped from ports on the Indus was rated as the finest.[43] The oldest fragment found at Mohen-Jo-Daro has sixty ends and twenty picks per inch and is made of thirtyfour counthreads. It was, because of its degree of refinement that cotton cloth was described in terms derived from Sindhi — Sindhu and Sindon.[44] The evidence of sheep breeding and large spindle whorls indicate that wool was also spun and woven at Mohen-Jo-Daro and Harrapa.[45]

(42) John Marshall, Op. Cit, P.

(43) Ibid, Op. Cit, P.

(44) Threadlines Pakistan, P. 9.
Also see: Nabi Buksh Qazi, "Sindon", an article published in Journal of the Institute of Sindhology, University of Sind, Jamshoro, 1970, PP. 31–36.

Also see: Mariwalla, *History of Commerce of Sind,* Jamshoro, Institute of Sindhology, 1981, PP. 14-15.

Also see: Adrain Duarte, Op. Cit. P. 13.

(45) Ethel-Jane W. Bunting, Op. Cit, P. 64.

According to Herodotus, Sindhian cloth was widely used in Egypt and the Mediterranean region around 500 B.C. Extremely fine muslins from Sind were worn by Roman Emperors from Augustus to Hadrian.[46] Similarly, the seventh century ruler of Mesopotamia wore Sindhian clothes. A ninth century Arab traveller, Suleman Tajir observed: "The cotton cloth of this country (Sind) is so nice that it can easily pass through a finger ring."[47]

As stated, the production of textiles in Sind had its roots in the civilization of Mohen-Jo-Daro. The craftsmen have always created new patterns or borrowed patterns from the art of other nations. Sindhi artists must have borrowed new patterns from Islamic art and introduced them in textile and printing patterns.

Archaeology suggests that the gilm (carpet) was a booming export item of the Indus Valley civilization, and that it adorned the palaces of the Pharoahs in Egypt.[48] Their use of royal purple as the main colour and the character or designs have led to the belief that the gilms were produced in royal workshops for the use of royalty.[49]





(46) Kennedy, J. *The Early Commerce of Babylon with India,* an article published in J.R.A.C., of Great Britain and Ireland, 1898, P. 252. Also see: Threadlines Pakistan, P. 11 & 51.

(47) Ibid.

(48) Ethel-Jane W. Bunting, Op. Cit, P. 64.

(49) Ibid, P. 64.

This tradition continued during the middle ages and received a tremendous boost with new technological developments and the introduction of new motifs under Muslim rule. European traders in the sixteenth century found that Sind weavers were producing not only high quality cotton textiles but also silk fabrics woven with fibre imported from Kashmir and Khorasan. Rohri was famous for its silk cloth called "Daryai". By the beginning of the seventeenth century, merchants from Portugal, the Netherlands and England had begun to buy cloth in a number of Sind towns namely, Thatta, Nasarpur, Halla, Gambat, Rohri and Sehwan. The East India Company opened an office in Thatta in 1635, and afterwards set up branches in Sehwan and Nasarpur. According to the agents of the Company there were three thousand families of weavers in Thatta,[50] most of whom made 'khes', which was exported to Iran, Iraq and Turkey.[51] Nasarpur had over a thousand families of weavers and the towns were known for excellent 'Bafta' cloth. It is historically true that this art continued during the early days of British rule. This art was very common in cities of Sind. Sehwan was noted for being a weaving centre. About 1000 households of weavers lived there and made a very good variety of baftas. Thatta was also a big centre of weaving during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. About 3000 families of weavers lived there.[52] Hamilton reports:

Nasarpur and Lakhi were also very well known as the centres of weaving. Besides these towns, Halla, Kandiaro and Gambat were very noted centres for weaving. This art has continued and has lived in Sind after Independence in 1947.

(50) Withington, *Early Travels in India,* Ed. Foster, 1921, PP. 217 & 218.

(51) Aitken, W.H., *Gazetteer of the Province of Sind,* Karachi, American Press, 1907, P. 388.

Also see: Hamilton A., *New Accounts of the East India in Pakistan's Travels,* Vol: VIII, PP. 304–9.

(52) Ref. 2, Op. Cit, P. 388.





Hand Printed Fabrics

Hand-printed Fabrics are one of the major and most ancient arts and crafts of the Indus Valley people.[53] The ancient techniques of this art are still practiced in Sind, where the cotton textile industry and the art of tieing and dyeing were highly developed from the time of the Indus Valley Civilization.[54] The traditional methods of printing with handblocks are least affected by modern technology. It still relies somewhat on natural dyes. The colours which are mostly used in this art are blue, red, yellow, green and black. With their traditional facilities, some of the most ancient animals, geometrical and floral motifs are still reproduced. Peacock and peacock feathers, fish scale motifs, zig-zag and flowing arabesques are part of the vast repertoire of block-print designs. The decorative styles and techniques of printing have been passed down as a family heritage. At the same time new designs and patterns have been created by some of the master-workers.

Ajrak preserves the most ancient techniques of block-printing, and is exclusively crafted in Sind.[55] Although, the historical evolution of Ajrak is undocumented, there is evidence to suggest that this sophisticated technique of printing cotton was known to the Sindhis at least two thousand years ago (during the Mohen-Jo-Daro civilization).[56] Its traditional colour combination is red, blue, white and black, and the dyes

(53) John Marshall, Op. Cit, P.
Also see: Threadlines, Op. Cit, P. 81.

(54) Threadlines, Op. Cit, P. 84.

(55) Threadlines, Op. Cit, P. 84.

(56) Ibid, P. 81.





were once derived from madder root and indigo. Yellow and green are still added, especially in Tando Mohammad Khan, and were derived from pomegranate rind, The use of mordant dyeing with madder was known in Sind by 2500 B.C.[57]

Therefore, since Ajrak is an Arabic word meaning blue, the inclusion of indigo as part of the traditional colour scheme may have also been established by that time.[58] Historically also this argument is not correct. It can be proved that this art has been in existence in the Indus Valley from 2500 B.C. Linguistically also this argument is baseless because indigo never grows/grew in any part of Arabic speaking areas. It was produced in Sind and it is still being produced in this region. The East India Company established its factory in Lower Sind for the purpose of purchasing and exporting indigo. Sehwan was an area noted for indigo growing.[59] Besides, one of the motifs on the tunic of the king priest of Mohen-Jo-Daro is the same that printed on Ajrak even today. Therefore, it can be claimed that Arab traders used the word "Azrak", exactly in the same manner in which they used the word "Bazaz" for the Sindhi word "Bajaj" which means "Cloth-merchant". Many other words could be quoted to support this argument.

(57) Threadlines, P. 81.

(58) Threadlines, Op. Cit. P. 84.

(59) Sotely, H.T. *Shah Abdul Latif of Bhit,* London, Oxford University Press, 1940, P. 41.



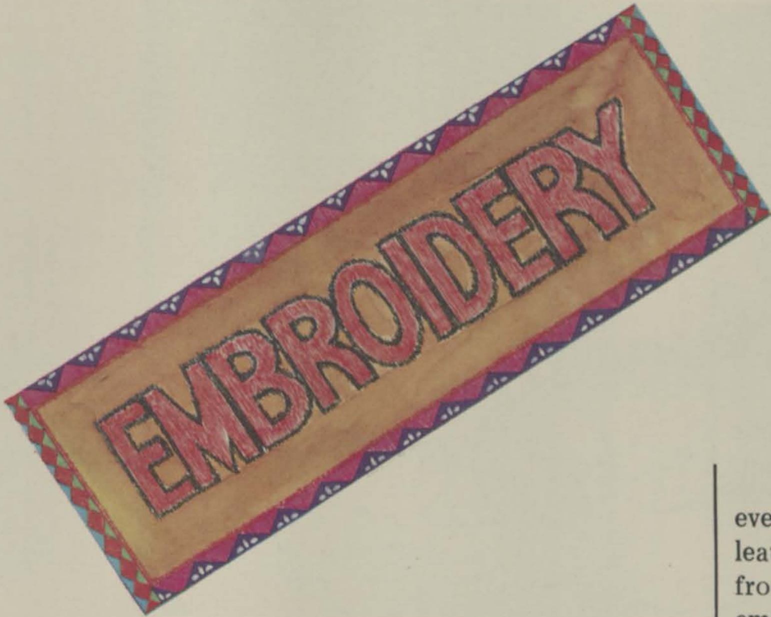
In view of Dr. Duarte:

"There is certainly colour and a primitive beauty in these products of the art of the Sind, but there is also something more. They possess a certain quaint old-word charm, which, to the connoisseur is not surprising. Sindhi crafts are very old. They have been practiced since the childhood of the world by a special class of artisans. These men worked on a limited number of things, determined by the materials to be had in the country. They employed age-old designs and age-old processes which have remained the same since times immemorial. The craftsmen, though of low social standing, have a certain dignity, an integrity, and a native courtesy inherent in children of the soil. They love and enjoy their work, taking infinite pains, and put their very best into it. They are, in short, not artisans but artists. Their handi-work naturally shares their character, and thus acquires a character of its own. They are essential Sindhian stamped with a peculiar and distinct individuality. No other province can imitate, much less match them."[60]

The argument that the art of Ajrak printing has its origins in the civilization of Mohen-Jo-Daro, as a matter of fact, discourages scholars who are of the opinion that the art of Ajrak printing was borrowed from the Arabs, after the Arab rule in Sind. The scholars of this opinion argue that the particular method of block printing with indigo, called 'Ajrak', the term which is derived from 'Azrak', an Arabic word for 'blue'. The arguments given by the author of the book "Threadlines" are worth accepting. She writes:

> "In the sub-continent, it seems that most probably this technique was used in Sind at least as early as in Egypt. Further strengthening this hypothesis is the fact that, at that time, there was an established Sea-trade and exchange of knowledge between Sind, the Arab World and Egypt."

(60) Adrain Duarte Dr., *The Crafts and Textiles of Sind and Baluchistan,* Jamshoro, Institute of Sindhology, University of Sind, 1982, P. 2.



Embroidery is an other art at which the women of Sind have been very expert for generations. The traditional embroidery patterns incorporate decorative elements prevailing in the art media of ancient times.[61] Embroidery is an established craft of the Indus Valley Civilization. Among the excavational finds at Mohen-Jo-Daro are thin bronze needles resembling those used for embroidery and the depiction of a figure robed with ornamental cloth. The robe of the king priest, a noble man, has trefoil motifs that are raised above the surface and suggest that they were embroidered.[62] This may be conjected but the fact remains that the inhabitants of Mohen-Jo-Daro were sophisticated craftsmen of many media and fancied decorative ornamentation.[63] Therefore, it is logical to assume that the ancient people of Sind also mastered embroidery which is a fundamental textile craft.

Mantles embroidered with gold, produced in those regions (Mohen-Jo-Daro region) are mentioned in the Rigveda. It can, therefore, be claimed that the art of embroidery with gold and silver threads existed in Sind from a very early period.

Sind has continued this art during every period of history. Embroidered leather slippers were exported to Baghdad from Sind in the 10th century.[64] Intricate embroideries on leather mats and pillow cushions were described by Marco Polo in the 13th century and by M/S Hamilton and Manrique in the 17th century.[65] as decorated with rich floral patterns, animals, and birds embroidered with gold and silver thread.

The wide range of decorative styles with different kinds of motifs can be discussed in relation to their different areas and work done by different ethnic groups. The Gaj (گج), unique to Thano Bula Khan of District Dadu, is a lavishly embroidered shirt with different kinds of colours and with different kinds of floral motifs and geometric patterns. It is fully covered with intricate thick silk embroidery and mirror work. The Lohanas and other Samat tribes of Thano Bula Khan are acclaimed for their fine craftsmenship in this art. Other extraordinary embroideries also come from Thano Bula Khan.

(61) Threadlines, Op. Cit, P. 27.

(62) Threadlines, Op. Cit, P. 27.

(63) Ibid.

(64) Sorely, H.T., Op. Cit. P. 99.

(65) Ibid.

Children's dresses are ornately embroidered on bright satin, some with their traditional circular motifs which also frequently decorate "abochanis" (ابوچھنی) which are employed with the greatest variety of Sindhi decorative styles and techniques. Like most Sindhi embroideries 'abochanis' are traditionally stitched on either white or red cloth.

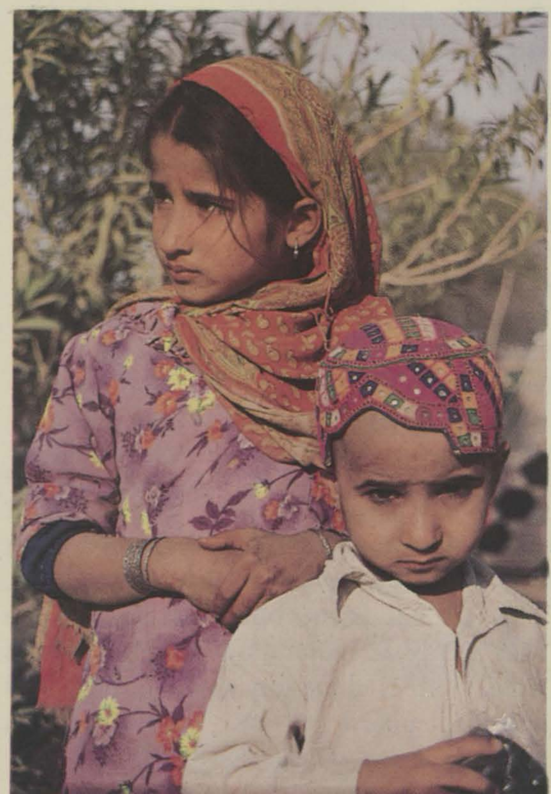
Mirror embroidery is very common in lower Sind, Thar and Kohistan. Pieces of glass are sewn with coloured thread on to the fabric. This takes the form of decorative trimming which can be put to many uses. Traditionally, brides wear a gaily coloured mirror-embroidered dress.

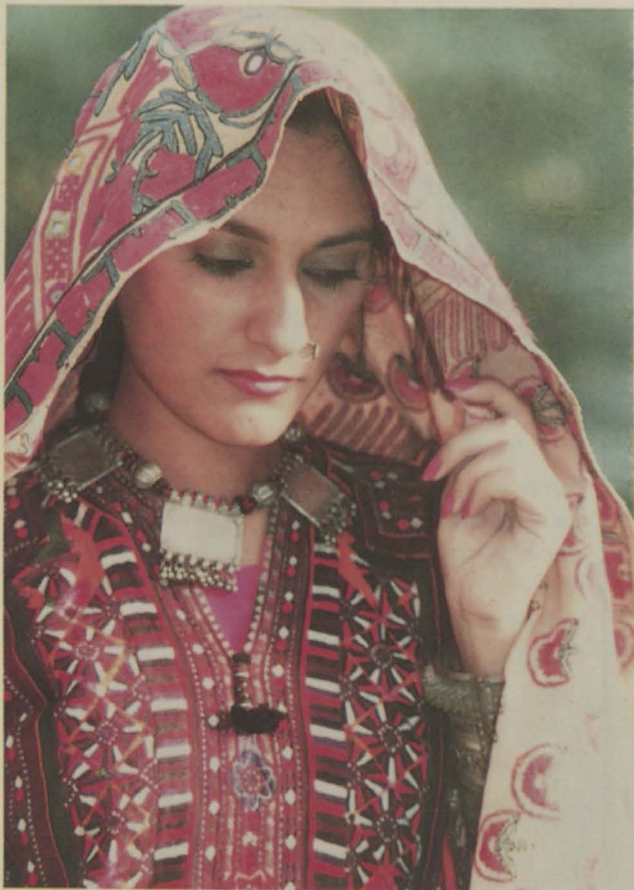
'Malir' is a black and red block-printed men's 'Chaddar', with circular motifs which are frequently embroidered heavily in the four corners with mirror work, some with abstract patterns of the peacock. This cloth is strictly worn by a bride-groom of Menghwar ethnic group of Sind.

The embroidery motifs on 'Bokani' (بوکانی) contains stylised and primitive animal motifs such as the peacock, elephant, camel, and scorpion. Similar abstract animal depictions are found on other embroideries which identify Hindu art styles of Sind. Bokani (بوکانی) from the Thar Desert are either embroidered on white or red cloth with small red equilateral triangles which are also, among many embroidery motifs, unique to Sind. They are typically repeated, often in groups of three and illustrate the symbolic depiction of the trinity that remains as ornamentation on many contemporary embroideries.

The Thari embroidery shows the influence of Hindu mythology and local architecture. Commonly the motifs are star-shaped designs representing the lotus flower. Floral designs, animal designs, the peacock and parrots are used in these designs. As a special characteristic, all these designs are disposed in geometrical patterns. The designs are planned, positions determined and worked out by bits of silk. Besides mirrors, beads and small shells (سیپیاں) also used as embellishment. In the Hindu embroidery of the Thar



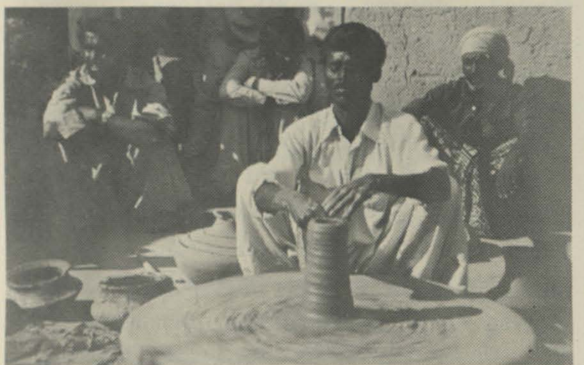




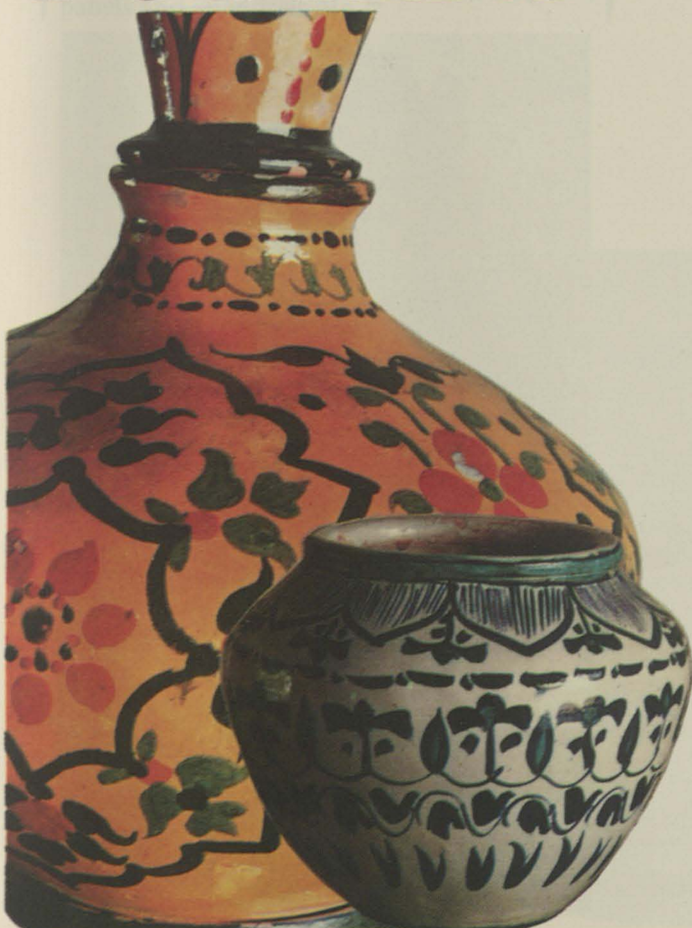




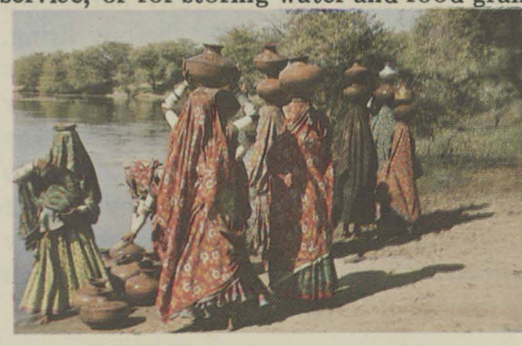
Desert, a peacock is depicted on one angle of triangular motifs. The motifs of the Tulsi plant or 'Ganesh' and a human figure are also depicted very commonly. This art has been continued through the ages and is also common during the present time. It is done on table covers, bed spreads, pillow covers, blouses, shirts, saries, trousers, shoes, caps and belts.



POTTERY



The crafts of moulding clay into articles of utility and objects of art has a tradition in Sind spread over thousands of years. The art of pottery has an unchanged tradition. The present day village potter may appear to have walked straight out of the ages of ancient history, his tools — the wheel and the rod — may not have changed for ages, and some of the things produced by him may closely resemble thousands of years old proto-types.[66] The potter's craft grew out of the need to meet the communities demand for utensils for cooking and service, or for storing water and food grain.



Pottery is one of the most diversified branches of Sindhian decorative art. Of ordinary domestic vessels, ninety nine percent were earthern ware. It was wheel made.[67] The use of foot-wheel or quick-wheel has continued to the present day.

Thus, this traditional craft of Sind has survived for the last 5000 years. The craftsmen in the ancient cities of the Indus Valley — Mohen-Jo-Daro and Harrapa — had discovered the use of the wheel and control of fire. Man had discovered geometry and the scared nature of abstract designing, and had evolved simple tools for the measurement of angles.

Pottery vessels exhibit a great variety of shapes. Amongst them are: offerings

(66) Rehman, I.A. *Arts and Crafts of Pakistan,* Karachi, Export Promotion Bureau, Press Trust House, I.I. Chundrigar Road, 1980, P. 21.

(67) John Marshall, M., P. 287.
Also see: Wheeler, M., Op. Cit, PP. 94 & 95.

stands, beakers, bowls, goblets, dishes, basins, pans, saucers, pipkins, cups, ladles, jarstands, heaters and storage jars. Most of these were wheel-made, well-fired and plain. The earthenware dishes of Sind vary in form, technique and decoration alike.

Glazed pottery was one of the arts of the people of Mohen-Jo-Daro. A vitreous glaze was used in a remarkable fashion upon a certain category of pottery found at Mohen-Jo-Daro at some of the earliest known levels. These sherds were of a light grey ware covered with a dark purplish slip which had then been carefully burnished. To this glaze was applied before firing. A portion of both glaze and slip was removed with a comb to form straight or wavy lines as a decorative pattern. In the view of Wheeler: "Nothing like this wave has yet been found in Mesopotamia, and it would appear to be a local and relatively short-lived invention, dating perhaps from the middle of the third millennium.[68]

In the view of John Marshall: "The multiplicity and variety of shapes of Indus pottery were peculiar to the Indus Valley and quite distinct from those of Persia and Mesopotamia. There is evidence enough that the craft of the potter had been practiced here since time immemorial".[69]

Wheeler remarks: "Most of the pottery is of pinkish ware with a bright red slip and decoration, where present, in black. Occasionally three colours — buff or pink, red and black-appear, and, more rarely, white and green are used, apparently after firing".[70]

The basic colour of Amri pottery was yellowish or pinkish-red and was decorated with colourful vegetable motifs. The potters ornamented their dishes with green and brown stylised floral designs and lines. The decoration of Amri pottery is geometrical and of a rough type, and there are a few specimens of bichrome in which painting in black, red[71] and green are used, apparently after firing.

More pictorial motifs included intersecting circles or derivative leaf-patterns, scales, chequers, lattice-work, kidney-shaped designs, comb-patterns, wave patterns variegated by cross hatching, semi-naturalisitic forms, notably palms, pipal trees and rosette-like floral units. Peacocks, sometimes, appear singly or in superimposed series, and fish are represented often with cross-hatched bodies.[72]

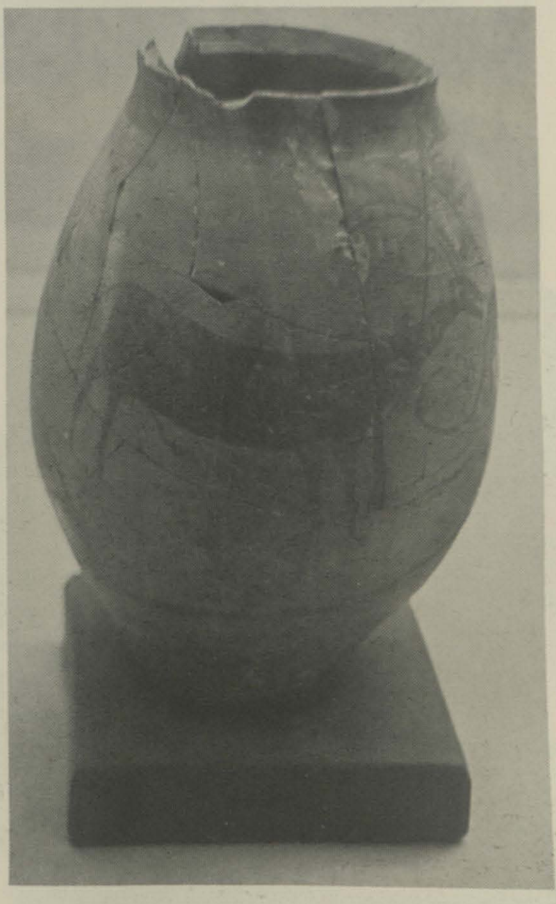
(68) Wheeler, M. The Indus Civilization, Op. Cit, p. 94 & 95.

(69) John Marshall, Op. Cit, P. 38.

(70) Wheeler M. Op. Cit, P. 94 & 95.

(71) Wheeler M. P. 45.

(72) John Marshall, P.



Besides the red and black ware, which is peculiar to the Indus culture, the pottery of Mohen-Jo-Daro comprised a few specimens of three other decorated wares, viz: incised, polychrome; and glazed. Glazed ware is included becuase it is not only the earliest example of its kind to us in the ancient world but a singularly fine fabric with the appearance almost of an opaque cream coloured glass with purplish black markings inscribed in relief on marble carved with human and animal figures.[73]

Although, this art, too, has been traced back to the Mohen-Jo-Daro civilization, it flowered between the twelfth and the seventeenth centuries under the patronage of Muslim rulers and saints.

The buildings of Thatta are conspicuous for the coloured enamel tiles which were lavishly used in the form of dados, panels and spandrels etc.[74]

A large number of complete and semi-complete pots of various shapes and sizes of unglazed plain pottery have been recovered from the Bhambore excavations. The unglazed painted pottery, particularly the thin-textured polychrome pottery, indicate a continuation of pre-Islamic artistic tradition.[75]

This art has continued to the present day. The Halla craftsmen break away from the monotonous colour of their environment by painting bright blue, yellow and golden flowers.

(73) Idress, S. M. Siddiqui, *Thatta,* Op. Cit, 1970, P. 7.

(74) Ibid, Op. Cit, P. 7.

(75) Khan.F.A., *Bhambore Excavations,* Op. Cit, P. 41.



Tile Decoration

The origin of tile decoration is attributed either to Iran or to Central Asia. The magnificent tile work of hundreds of mosques, shrines, fortresses and tombs during the Muslim period has placed this region (Sind) among those possessing the richest treasure in this field. According to Idrees Siddiqui:

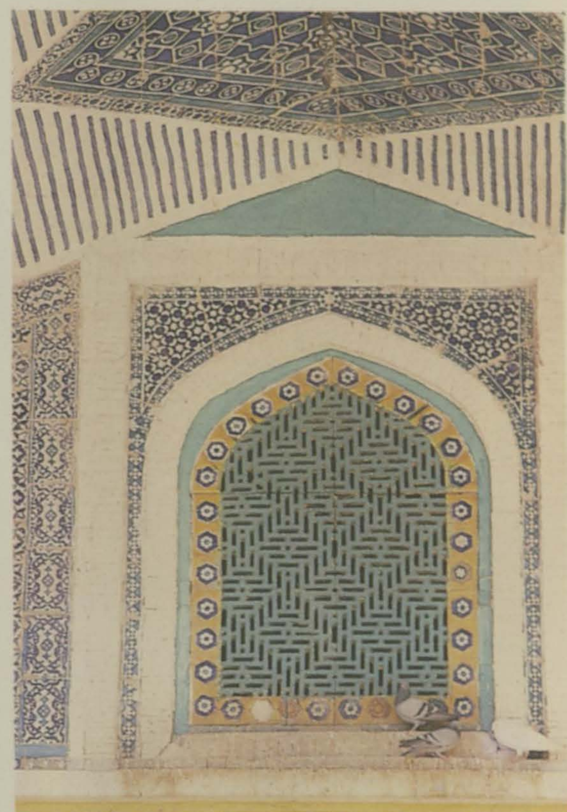
> "The glazed tiles of Sind were largely influenced by the traditions surviving in Persia from the ancient civilizations of Babylon and Nineveh. The local traditions ascribing them to Chinese workmen reported to have migrated to Sind at a very early period can hardly to be taken seriously, since the workmanship has more Persian than Chinese character."[76]

Mr. Idrees Siddiqui further states.

> "The influence of Iranian craftsmen, however, does not show an overwhelming effect, and the tiles of Thatta have their own individual characteristics. The varied ways in which they have been used, the patterns of decoration, the textile and the colour schemes are distinctively original and differ from the tile-work of Multan, Uch, Lahore, Bedar and Delhi."[77]

(76) Idrees M. Siddiqui, *Thatta*, Op. Cit, P. 8.

(77) Ibid.

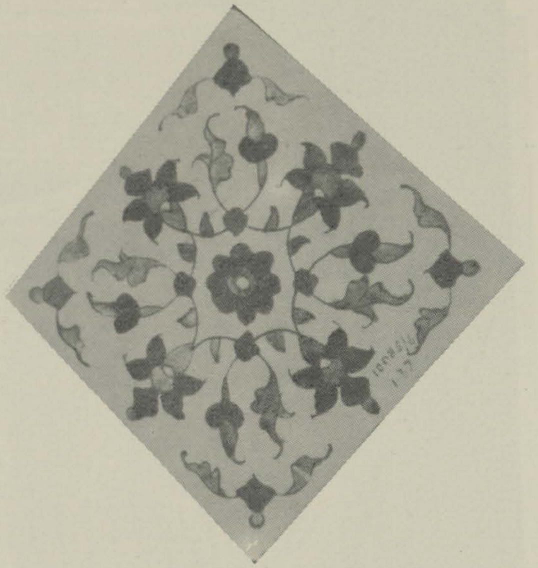


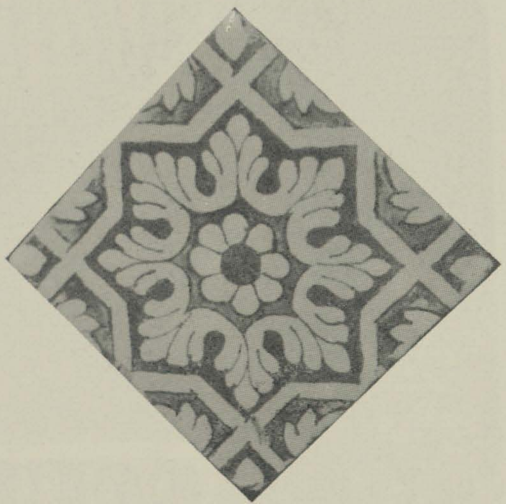
This craft reached its zenith in Sind, in Thatta and Halla in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The earliest specimens of tile decoration in Sind are found in Dabgir Mosque, at Thatta, in 1588 A.D.[78] The floral patterns and scrollas in glazed tiles in the mausoleum of Jani Beg Tarkhan (d. 1601) at Makli are examples of superb craftsmanship.[79] The most striking example of tile work which cannot only be seen in Sind but all of Pakistan is found at the Shah Jehan Mosque built in 1644—1647 at Thatta. The domes of the mosque have been exquisitely laid in a mosaic of traditional blue and white.[80]

The Jame-e-Masjid at Khudabad is yet another example where tiles have been lavishly used. Both sides of the entrance have been bedecked by the superb paintings of coloured glazed tiles, representing a tall and graceful lily plant whose lanceolate leaves, flowers and buds sprout from the central stem and fall over right and left in natural curves. The whole plant is executed in white on dark blue ground.[81]

The mausoleums of Sultan Ibrahim (Shurfa Khan) and Jani Beg Tarkhan at Makli hill, Thatta, present a picturesque and colourful sight.[82] The motifs and designs on all traditional pottery glazed and unglazed, are derived from both nature and art traditions. Sun-flowers, pipal leaf, roseleaf, fish, ducks, camel, arabesque and geometric designs are among the common patterns done on tiles.

Thatta tiles are generally of two colours, white and blue, the latter varying from a dark purplish to a light greenish or turquoise blue.[83] Both colours are transparent and acquire an effect of depth and richness by their treatment. Yellow was also used as a foil to emphasise the brilliance of blues.[84] This has been continued by artisans to the present day.





(78) Idrees, S. M. Siddiqui, *Thatta,* Op. Cit, P. 7.

(79) Ibid.

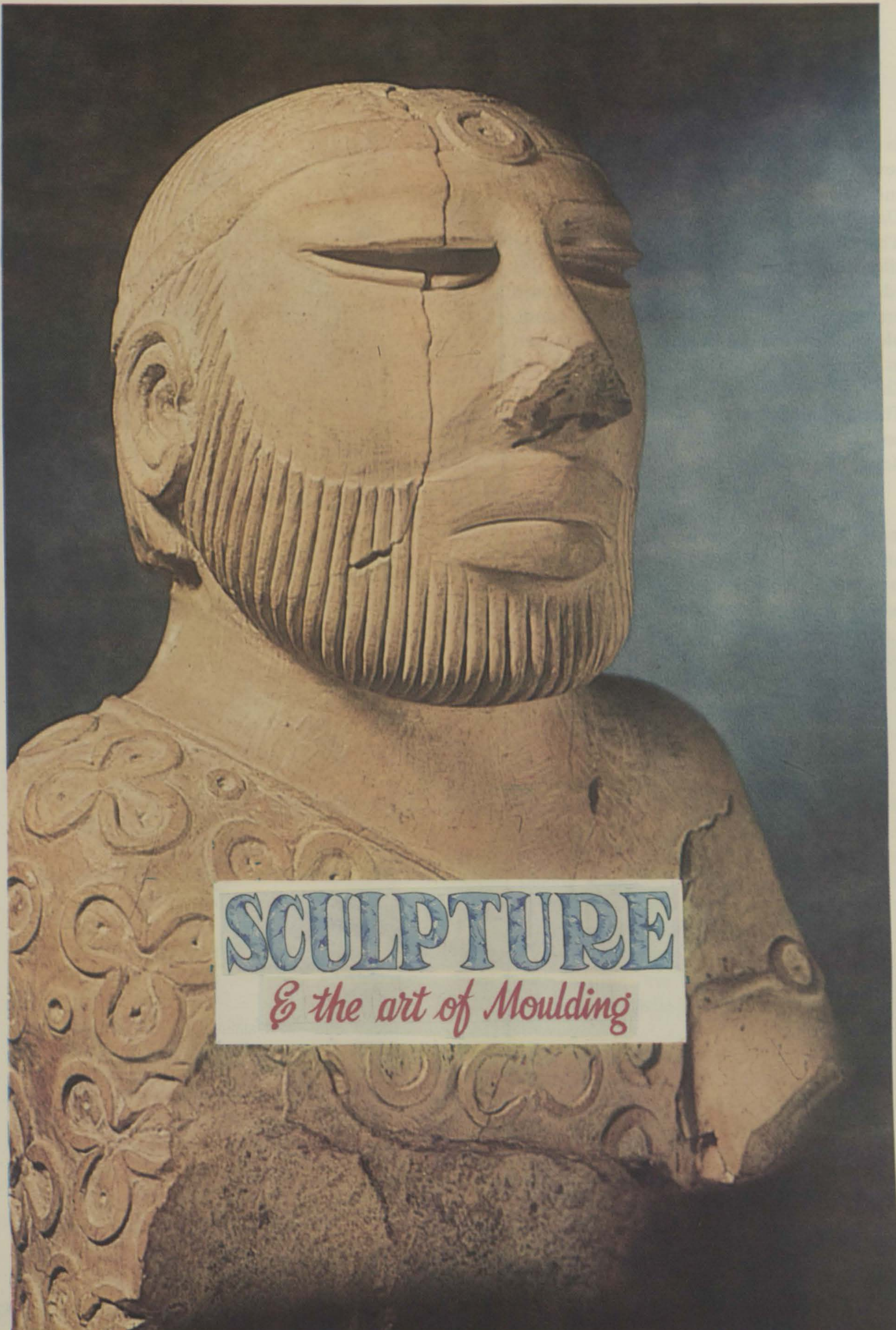
(80) Ibid.

(81) Ibid.

(82) Ibid.

(83) Idress, S. M. Siddiqui, *Thatta,* P. 8.

(84) Ibid, *Thatta,* P. 8.

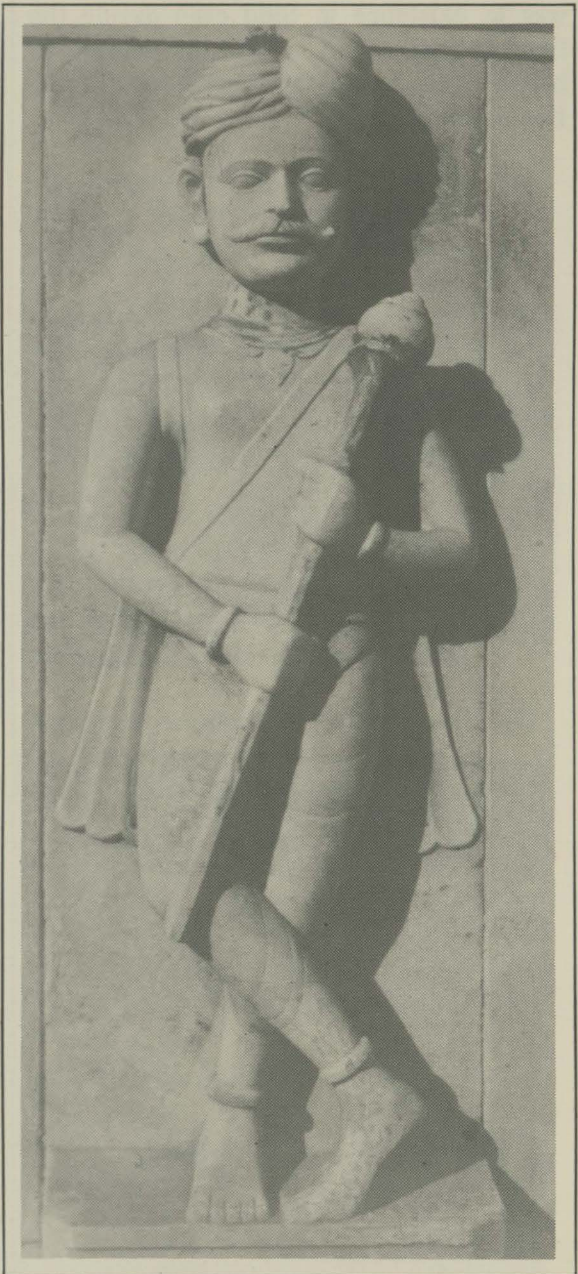

SCULPTURE
& the art of Moulding

The highest expression of form in art is through sculpture. The earliest examples of sculpture in the sub-continent go back to proto-historic times, the Harrapan period in the third millennium B.C. The most monumental products of the Indus Civilization are the stone sculptures[85] In the view of Wheeler:

> "It is fair to presume that the artists who produced the little figurine of the dancing girl or the vital rendering of animal forms on the steatite seals, represent an aesthetic capacity more broadly based than the recovered examples of it alone would indicate."[86]

This art was quite developed and some of the pieces that have survived are proof of the sculpture's advanced knowledge of human anatomy, as well as their impressive craftsmanship. There are many sculptural representations of human figurines, animals, and birds. The renowned dancing girl from Mohen-Jo-Daro is an image in metal which is world famous.[87] Thus, it can be claimed that the people of Sind were also expert in the art of sculpture, moulding, and making different kinds of designs and patterns from clay, stone, bronze and other metals.

Moulding in clay is well presented by elegant examples in both classical and folk styles of an early age. The potter, as the most ancient creator of form, the earthen pot or the icons of the goddess, is also the priest who moulds the clay. The Mohen-Jo-Daro and Harrapa craftsmen who have left a treasure of terra-cota miniatures — monkeys, squirrels, bullocks, deer, birds, statuettes of women, and carts — designed probably as toys for children although some seem to have been clearly meant for use as ornaments.



(85) Wheeler M., Op. Cit, P. 86.

(86) Ibid.

(87) Kan Barnett and Suresh Sharma (ed). *The Indian Experience,* Hong Kong, Thomason Press, Hong Kong Ltd: 1982. P. 41.

From the excavations at Bhambore it was found that the art of pottery moulding was in existence in Sind even during the first century B.C.[88] The arts mentioned below were found in excavations[89] from Bhambore.

(a) Pottery mould with geometric-cum-floral patterns and human or animal representations.

(b) Spouted pot with animals and birds in relief stamped on the upper part, flat base and narrow mouth.

(c) A mould depicting a dancing couple.

(d) A mould depicting a frieze of elephants with sun-flower.

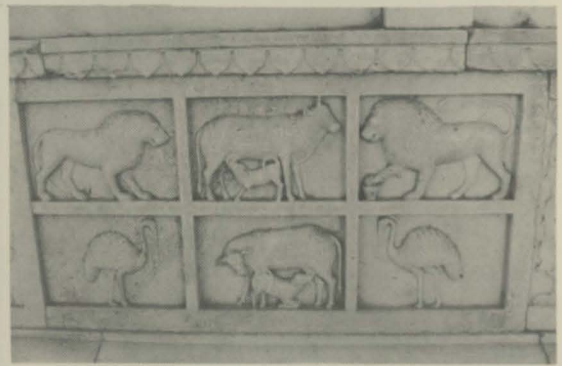
(e) Neck of a pitcher with peacock and floral designs on a buff background.

(f) Brass model of Brahma, the standing God of creation represented with four faces and called "Chau-Mukho".

(g) Stamped and moulded pottery has been recovered from the Hindu-Sassanian levels. The stamped designs are generally confined to geometric patterns only.

(h) The painted designs include friezes of stylised ducks, water-fowls, cranes, fish, snakes, peacocks with elaborate hatchured tails and stylised geometric patterns like the rising sun.

There are many sculptural representations of men, animals and birds executed on temples and tombs at Nagarparkar, Thatta, Sehwan and Chaukundi. At Nagarparkar this art dates back from the 8th to the 10th centuries A.D. The temples mentioned below are full of this art:



(i) Elephant pillar door jambs in wood in a temple depicting the figures of Krishna with a flute and Radha at the top and colourful Gopies and Gopas, presenting a dance known as "Rash Mandalls".

(ii) At the Shiva temple of the 10th & 11th centuries A.D. at Nagarparkar, there is a stone frame in relief with marble figures in a joyous mood, playing different musical instruments. They are flanked on either side by elephants with riders. In the lower part are four boys with male and female figures.

At this temple, there is a marble slab inscribed in relief, carved with human and animal figures. In the lower part of it is an incised inscription in Deva-Nagri (10th-11th century).

(iii) A standing stone mode of goodess Durga, also known as a "Shu-Shakti", with four hands holding a wheel (Shudarshana Chakar) firsul and lotus in her hand and attended by two guards.

(88) Khan, F.A. *Bhambore Excavation*, PP. 15 & 34.

(89) Ibid, P. 16.

The sculptures of Buddha have been found in many places in Mohen-Jo-Daro, Khau-Jo-Daro at Mirpur Khas, Suderan-jo-Thul upto Budhaka Takara, near Jhirak.

In some figures the image of Buddha is seated cross-legged in the meditative position (dhyana-mudra), with both hands one upon the other, in the lap, and palms turned upwards. The Buddha is represented seated in some figures upon a lotus and in others upon a four legged stool. The images have all been painted. Buddha has been made to wear red robes, has a golden complexion, with black eyes and black hair. They therefore appear to have been covered with a thin egg-shell layer, or some very superior clay before baking. The body is fully clothed with an ample robe which covers both shoulders and hangs in folds.[90]

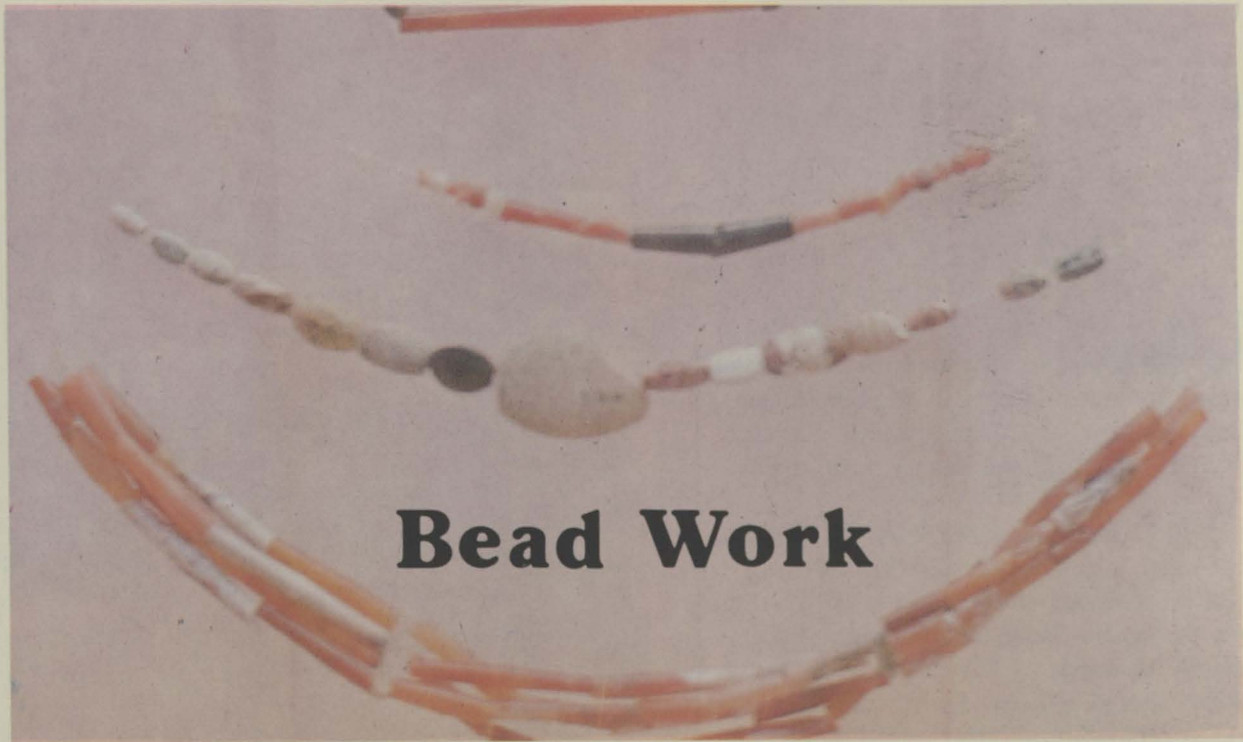
The representations of a turban, materials of war and weapons are the distinct indication that the graves belong to men. These graves are found scattered in different parts of Sind, such as Makli, Sonda, Hellaya village, Jungshahi, Gujo, Raj Malik, Chaukundi, Malir, Mangho Pir, Sud-Sudderan Jo Thul, Chorolo graveyard, Bhodemar graveyard near Nagarparkar[91] and Jain temples near Nagarparkar. The distinguishing features of figural themes invariably indicate that the builders of these tombs were warriors and hunters.

(90) Cousens, H. *Antiquities of Sind*, Second edition, Karachi, Oxford University Press, 1975, P. 90.

(91) The graves at this graveyard are built of burnt bricks.







Bead Work

The art of beadwork was also very common in Sind. The processes of sawing, flaking, grinding and boring the stone beads is well illustrated at Chanhu-Jo-Daro, in a bead-maker's shop.[92] The technique was a laborious and skilful one. A remarkable series of gold beads were included in a hoard of jewellery found at Mohen-Jo-Daro.[93]

Mr. Bellasis also found similar beads including one with Devanagari letters. Of these he writes.

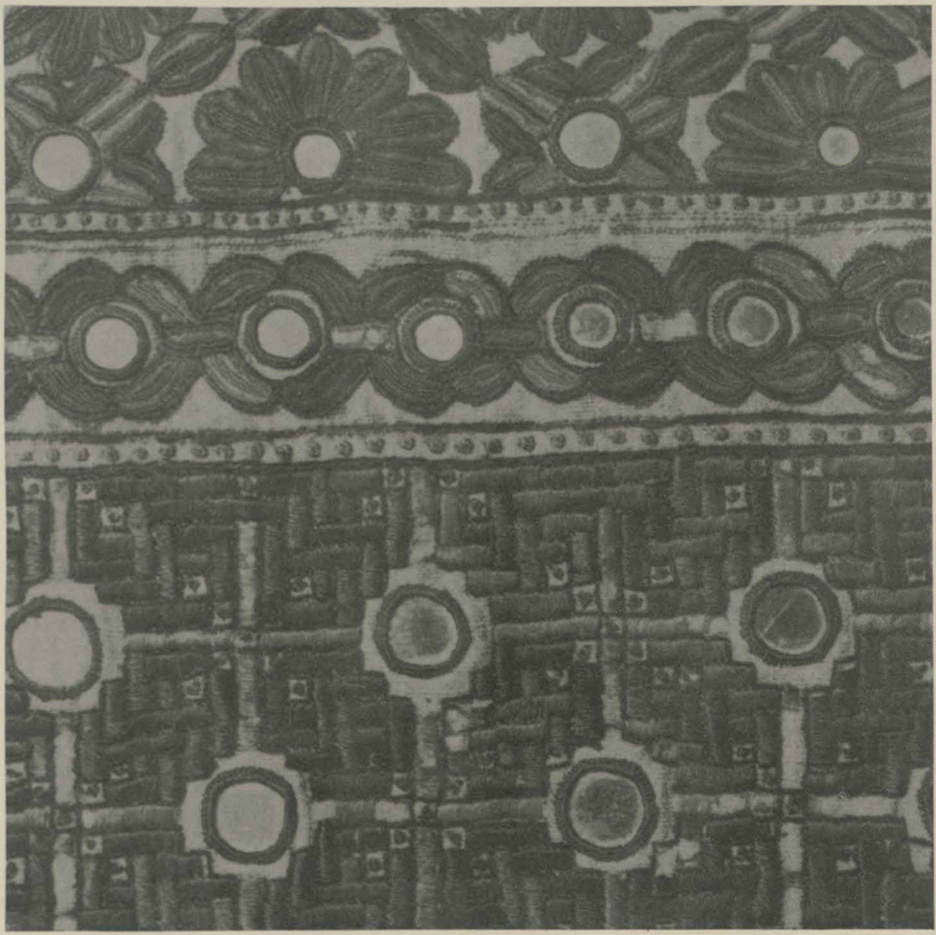
> "Among the curiosities found at Brahmanabad, showing an advanced state of art, are some beautiful engravings on cornelian and agate. Many of them are perfect gems of art, and, like the intaglios of Rome, are polished on the inside of the device an art, I believe, now lost. Some, had a bull upon them and others a lion, some merely a name in Arabic and some in characters resembling the Devanagari or Sanskrit. Most of these appeared in ovals and circles."[94]

From this, we can gather that this art was an ancient one which continued through the period of Arab occupation.

(92) Wheeler, M., *The Indus Civilization*, P. 98.

(93) Wheeler, M., *Mohen-Jo-Daro*, Op. Cit, P. 98.

(94) Cousens, H. *The Antiquities of Sind*, Karachi, reprinted Oxford University Press, 1975, PP. 55-56.



In connection with the cornelian beads, the designs traced upon them in white, Mr. Bellasis writes:

> "Repeating the cornelians ornament figure with patterns in white lines, a perfectly smooth surface, and which I thought so curious in my first paper, I have made further enquiry, and while at Sehwan in upper Sind, an old city found for cornelian engravers, I found some stones figured in exactly a similar manner. On examination it was ascertained that the chief ingredients used were potash, white lead and the juice of the Kirar bush (Cappaits aphylla), made into a thick liquid, and applied with a pen on the cornelian, which, on being exposed to red heat in Charcoal, rendered the device indeli ble."[95]

(95) Cousens, H. Op. Cit, P. 55-56.



The arts of sculpture and painting were the first amongst the crafts. Just as rivers poured into oceans, so also arts were dependent on painting (Chitra).[96] But the knowledge of 'Chitra' could only come from a knowledge of vocal music, instrumental music and dancing.[97] The starting point, then, for the serious artist, was the study of vocal music. The ear awakening to listening, to sound, to volume and to meaning.[98]

It has been mentioned earlier that painting on pottery was very common in Sind before the advent of Islam. Some examples given in the Bhambore excavation report are witness to this statement.[99] After the Muslim reign of Sind, the arts of sculpture and painting of the human figure received a set back for obvious reasons, yet several rulers encouraged the art of painting. Like other fine arts, Sindhis were also very fond of painting. The rulers and people of high rank were great patrons of all arts including the fine arts. Kings and rulers of every dynasty gave a breath of spring to the artists.

(96) Ken Barnett and Suresh Sharma (ed), *The Indian Experience*, Hong Kong, Thomason Press, Hong Kong Limited, 1982, P. 83.

(97) Ibid.

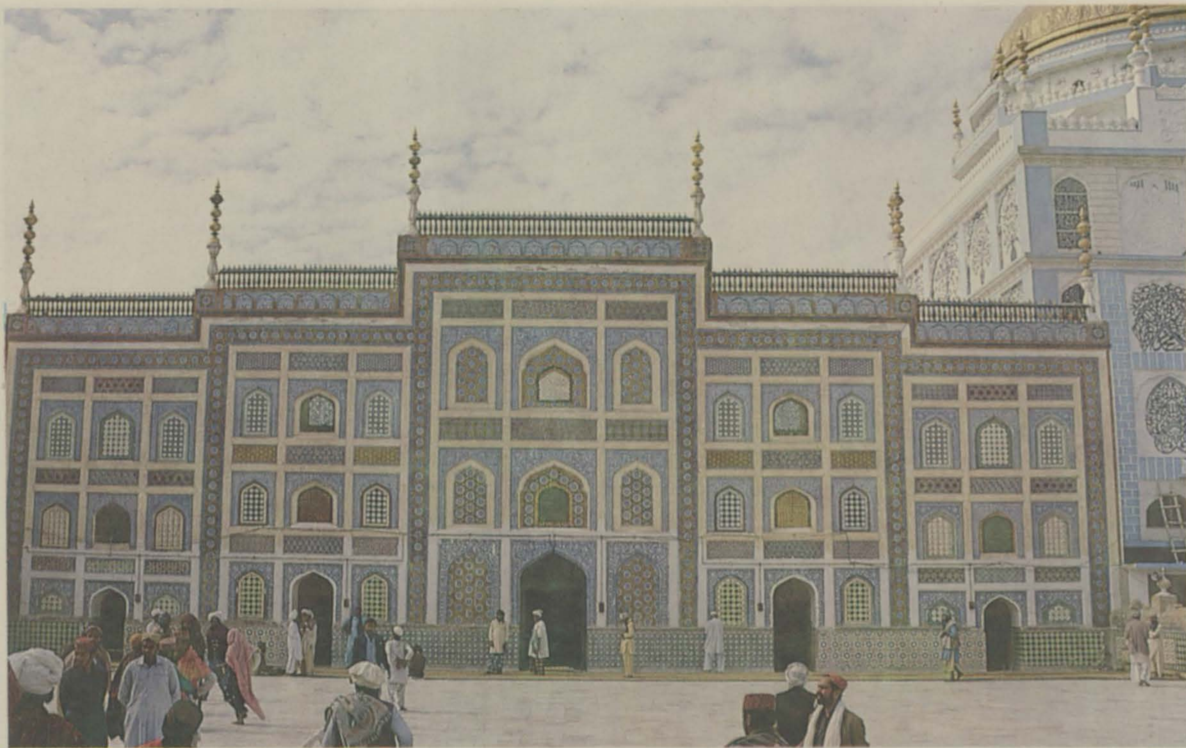
(98) Ibid.

(99) Khan F.A., *Bhambore* Op. Cit, pp. 34 & 35.



It is not known when the art of painting was started in Sind but the history of Sind records that during the days of Arghuns and Tarkhans (1521—1555), like scholars and intellectuals, artists also migrated to Sind from Iran and other Muslim countries. Local experts and artists took advantage of these craftsmen and their expertise. From the examples given above it is evident that Sind was very rich in many branches of arts and crafts.

Similarly, the art of painting had also flourished in Sind in the days of Arghuns and Tarkhans. Mirza Jani Beg Tarkhan and afterwards his son Mirza Ghazi Beg Tarkhan, according to Shaikh Khurshid Hassan, were closely associated with the court of Akber and Jehangir. Jani Beg's daughter was married to Prince Khusrau. Mirza Baqi Beg Tarkhan and his son Mirza Muzafar were married to Rajput Princesses.



There is no doubt that the Rajput and Mughal traditions might have influenced or motivated Sindhi artists and painters, with the result that they initiated and developed their own styles and traditions, as is noticed from the portraits and paintings of the Kalhora and Talpur periods. Shaikh Khurshid Hassan in his paper "Paintings in Muslim Sind", states.

> "There is an indication that Mirza Ghazi Beg Tarkhan had built two palaces in Thatta, which were decorated with wall-paintings. No doubt, these palaces were executed in the same style, as is depicted in the wall-paintings of Agra and Lahore.[100] Although, the remains of these palaces have not the vicissitude of time, yet it is fair to presume that the wall-paintings executed in the palaces could not remain unaffected by the Mughal and Rajput traditions of painting, specially when the Tarkhans and Mughals in certain cases, had entered into matrimonial bondage."[101]

Shaikh Khurshid Hassan further argues:

> "It is, however, strange that, although Sind and particularly the city of Thatta, which remained its capital for over four centuries (1520–1739 A.D.) and was a seat of Islamic learning, arts and crafts does not provide enough material on the subject of paintings. Some material discussed below, bears eloquent testimony to the fact that there was a Sindhi school of painting which was contemporary to the Rajput and Deccani paintings".

We come across very impressive paintings printed in black and white in Tohfat-ul-Kiram which was edited by Sayid Hussamuddin Shah Rashdi. The details of these paintings are given below:

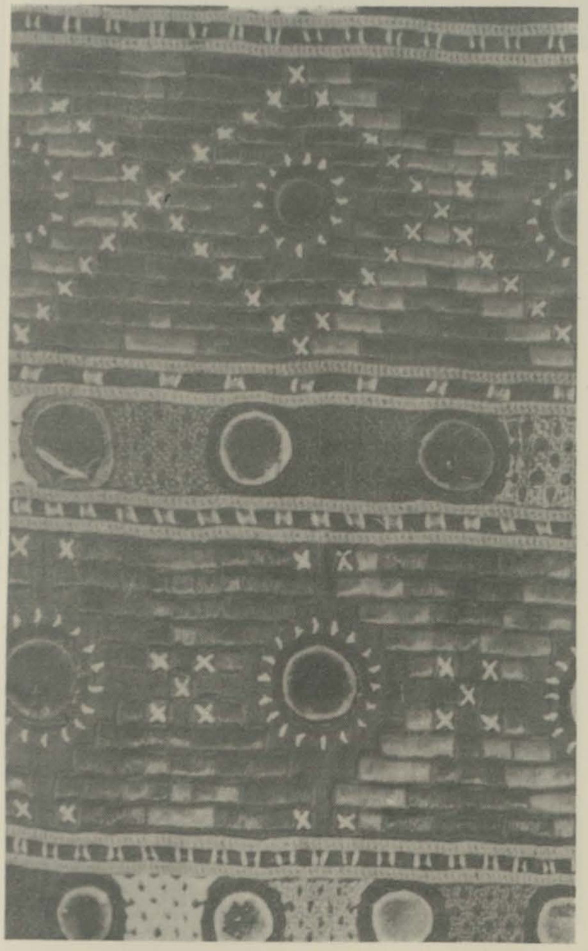
(100) Shaikh Khurshid Hassan, *"Painting in Muslim Sind"* an article, published in Archaeology of Sind, Op. Cit, P. 25 & 26.

(101) Ibid.

(i) A portrait of Mirza Ghazi Beg Tarkhan S/o Mirza Jani Beg Tarkhan is shown in the Mughal attire.[102] He is shown being honoured in the court of Emperor Jehangir. No doubt, this painting indicates the Mughal tradition of painting.

(ii) A portrait (half size) of Mirza Ghazi Beg, printed in black and white in the book referred to above. The name of the artist is mentioned as 'Manohar'. In this portrait Mirza Ghazi Beg is shown in Mughal attire, with a rose flower in his left hand. His turban is of Mughal style. No doubt, this portrait is prepared by the artist who is well versed with the Mughal school of painting.[103]





(iii) Another full size portrait of Mirza Ghazi Beg Tarkhan printed in black and white in the above referred book edited by Sayid Hussamuddin Shah Rashdi is painted in the same style as mentioned above under (ii). This portrait has been painted by the artist whose name is Manohar.[104]

(iv) A portrait (half size) of Mir Abdul Baqa Amir Khan Governor of Thatta (1039 A.H. – 1041 A.H. and from 1052 A.H. – 1057 A.H.) is printed in black and white in Tohfat-ul-Kiram, edited by Sayid Hussamuddin Shah Rashdi. This portrait indicates the Mughal school of painting. The Amir is shown dressed in Mughal style costume.[105]

(102) Ali Sher Qan'ee, Tohfat-ul-Kiram, edited by Sayid Hussamuddin Shah Rashdi, Jamshoro, Sindhi Adabi Board, 1971, p. 540.

(103) Ibid.

(104) Ali Sher Qan'ee, Tohfat-ul-Kiram, edited by Sayid Hussamuddin Shah Rashdi, Op. Cit, P. 542.

(105) Ali Sher Qan'ee, Tohfat-ul-Kiram, Op. Cit, P. 564.

(v) A colour portrait of Miyan Mohammad Atur Khan Kalhora reveals that the Sindhi artists were masters in the art of painting, the portraits of personalities of their time. The portrait of Miyan Mohammad Atur Khan was acquired by Dr. N.A. Baloch, a learned scholar of Sind, from a village near Sadiqabad in the former Bahawalpur State from an Abbasi family which claims to be the decendents of the Kalhora kings of Sind. This portrait was printed in the Bulletin of the Institute of Sindhology, under the patronage of the author of this book.[106] In this portrait Miyan Mohammad Atur Khan is draped in a typical Sindhi attire. He is shown wearing white "Pahran" and Shalwar. On the Pahran, Shikarpuri style of Sindhi embroidery is depicted. The Prince is wearing a scarf with Sindhi embroidery and at the end of the scarf there are fundan (ڦندن). The complexion of the face of the prince is typical of that of a Sindhi of northern Sind, which resembles the face of a person of a Brahui tribe. The beard of the prince is also of Sindhi style. The cover of the pillow on which the prince is resting is made from cloth printed and depicting the motifs of printed fabric in Sind. The prince is shown sitting in a courtyard, with a balcony of carved stones. The carving patterns shown on these are exactly the same which can still be seen at the stone balcony of the tomb of Miyan Yar Mohammad Kalhoro at Khudabad or those of Miyan Ghulam Shah Kalhoro at Hyderabad. In the background of this portrait, the landscape of a town of lower Sind is painted. The houses of the town are depicted with windcatchers, which are the special architectural characteristics of lower Sind in general and that of the city of Thatta and Hyderabad in particular. It shows that this portrait has either been painted at Hyderabad or the painter was from the city of Hyderabad. The colours used in this painting are purely Sindhian colours, i.e. white, blue, yellow and maroon.

(vi) We have come across an illustrated Divan (ديوان) in Urdu which is the property of the Talpurs of Hyderabad. In this manuscript the miniature painting and also portraits of many rulers and personalities have been illustrated. The paintings and portraits of Fateh Ali Shah Qachar, the Emperor of Iran, Emperor Humayun, Emperor Aurangzeb, Empress Noor Jehan, Mir Fateh Ali Khan Talpur, Mir Rustam Khan, Mir Sobdar, Mir Mohammad Nasir Khan, Mir Shahdad Khan, Mir Hussain Ali Khan and Mir Abbas Ali Khan are worth mentioning. The artist's name is mentioned as Abdul Muzanib Khadim Bardwani, dated Zulhaj 1272 A.H.[107]

One may agree or disagree with the conclusions, but the illustrated manuscripts bear positive proof that Thatta and Hyderabad were once centres of book production as well as of miniature paintings.

(106) See the Bulletin of Institute of Sindhology, Vol: IV.

(107) Mirza Gul Hassan Karbalai *"Talpur Hakiman-ja-Ilmi Karnama"* an article published in *Mehran jun maujun*, Karachi, Pakistan Publications, P. 36.



It is very important to point out that the art of wall-painting was very common during the days of Tarkhan, Mughal, Kalhora rulers and this art continued afterwards during the Talpur and British rule in Sind. The painted walls of some mosques and shrines of saints and rulers of Sind are witness to this claim. Interesting panels of wall-paintings have been noticed at Dargah of Shah Turail, near Tando Bago, District Badin, Gori-Jo-Mandir, District Tharparkar, Shah Latif's mosque, at Bhit Shah, Kario-Ghahnwar Mosque, District Badin and Gara (blackish in colour) Quba, near Chhachh Jehan Khan, District Thatta and Qadir Bux Ja Quba, near Khairpur. A wide variety of curious themes have been depicted in these paintings. In one of the paintings at the Thul graveyard, District Dadu prominent tribal leaders along with their wives are shown sitting. Another painting depicts a fighting scene represented with mounted horse and elephant. In an other painting at Thul graveyard, two crocodiles are shown in a canal. In the same picture one of the crocodiles is trying to catch a child, while a man is struggling to save the child from its clutches.

Notable features of some of the paintings are the representations of various birds and animals. The birds, which are in flying postures have spread feathers. They include parrots, peacocks, pigeons, cranes, and ducks. Among the animals depicted in the paintings are camel, horses, cows, goats and sheep. In one of the paintings, a local variety of fish, "Rahoo", which is known for its delicious taste, was noticed. All these paintings have a local touch and possess the country's landscape with an impression of local colour. They are simple in composition but are full of life. These paintings have their own individuality and represent the Sindhi school of painting.

They need study in detail. The paintings at Qadir Bux Ja Quba depict representations of various birds, trees and flowers.

Similarly, the paintings on the walls of the graveyard at Qadir Bux Ja Quba near Khairpur Mir's Fateh Bagh and Kettian-Ja-Quba in Badin District and Talpur Tombs at Hyderabad invite the attention of lovers of art in general and of those interested in paintings in particular.

Sindhi artists also used canvas for the art of painting. The colour painting of a Sindhi artist on canvas is of Mir Shahdad Khan Talpur (d. 1875 A.D.), a ruler of Hyderabad. The Mir is shown mounted on a grey horse, attired in a typical Sindhi Talpur prince soldier's dress. The painting is life-size. The Mir is shown amidst typical Sindhi surroundings depicting date palm trees with a headwear shield, and a bejewelled sword. The movements of the horse are in perfect harmony with the remaining posture of the body. The saddle is richly embroidered in gold on the margin. The horse trapping is also richly studded with precious stones. The size of the painting is: 39" x 33.4". It is identified as belonging to Hyderabad during the 19th century.

The portrait of Aga Syed Ismail Shah Isphahani, foreign minister during the period of Mir Karam Ali Khan Talpur, shows him sitting over a Farasi with a woven border, resting over a pillow, holding a flower in his hand and wearing a typical Sindhi cap in maroon colour and a yellow shawl. The size of this portrait is: 10.6" x 7.2". Its date is early 19th century.[108]

The illustrated collection of manuscripts of the Mirs of Khairpur and Hyderabad are witness to the existence and development of the art of painting in Sind. In this collection there are many illustrated paintings. From the details given above it can be said that there were many artists in Sind who were busy in the art of painting.

The prominent artist of the Tarkhan period was Mahotar, whose life sketch in detail is not available. Similarly, the names of the artists of the Kalhora period are not traceable. The prominent artists of the Talpur period were:

(i) Mirza Ali Akbar Gazi who painted a portrait of Mir Mohammad Naseer Khan in water-colour in 1268 A.H. In this painting the Mir, in his royal robes, is seated cross-legged and resting against a big pillow. His sword is placed on his left knee and a rosary on his right. The painting is 10¾" x 1.7" in size, and is in the collection of the relics of Quaid-i-Azam. Now it is the property of the Department of Archaeology, Government of Pakistan.[109]

(ii) Abdul Muzahib Khadim Bardwani whose portrait, painted in the Urdu Divan is an excellent specimen of paintings of Talpur days.

Many artists came from Central Asia when the Turks conquered the regions which are now known as Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

This art has lived afterwards, during the British period and later. The names of many prominent artists can be mentioned.

(108) *Archaeology of Sind*, P. 71.

(109) Fazal Qadir & Mirza Mohammad Baig, *Relics of the Quaid-e-Azam*, Karachi, Department of Archaeology and Museums, Ministry of Culture and Tourism, Government of Pakistan, 1980, P. 110.

Miniature Paintings

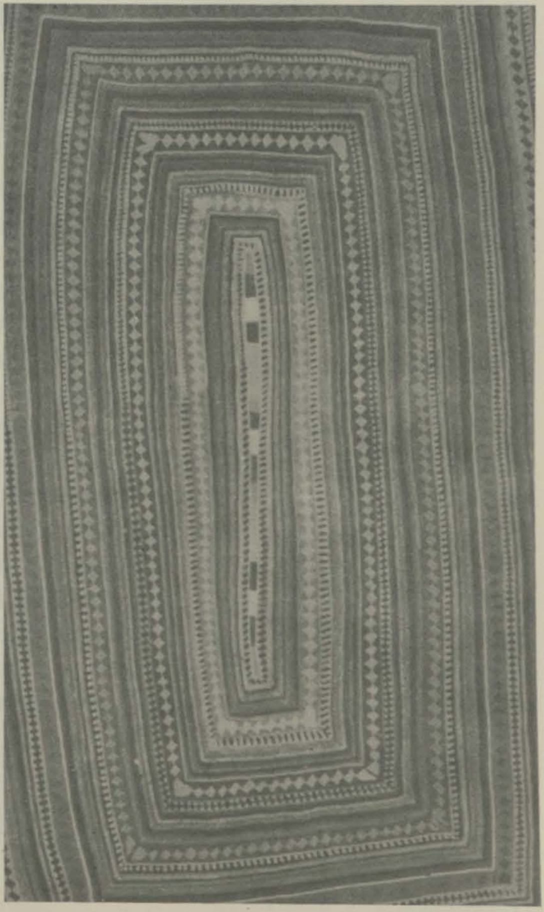
It is a well known fact that miniature painting reached its zenith in the sub-continent under the patronage of the Mughal Emperors, Akber and Jehangir. With the decline of the Mughals, many provincial schools of painting developed. Most outstanding among them were 'Kangra', 'Rajput' and 'Deccan' schools of painting. All these were founded on Mughal traditions and subsequently they produced an immense wealth of visual art.[110]

It has been mentioned that Sind was an advanced country in every field of art. The question, therefore, arises as to how it is possible that Sindhi artists or the people of Sind who have proved themselves great lovers of art, did not take interest in the art of miniature or other kinds of painting?

We do not have any information of the days of the Sama rulers (1351 A.D. — 1521) and nothing has remained of the collections of the Sama kings of Sind, so far the art of miniature painting is concerned. It is a fact that the Kalhora kings of Sind were very fond of illustrated and illuminated manuscripts. It is a matter of great pleasure and happiness for lovers of art to know that recently and illustrated copy of "Saif-ul-Maluk-wa-Badi-al-Jamal" was found by late Idrees Siddiqui in the British Museum. The illustrated copy is written in Nasta'liq script. In this manuscript there are 109 folios, each measuring 9¾" x 4¾". There are 65 illustrations occupying either the top, middle or bottom of the text but none covers the entire page. It was completed in the city of Thatta during the days of Kalhora rulers by Muhammad Waris, in the month of Shaban, 1190 A.H./1st October 1775. The headings are in red and each folio is framed by a border with two red and three black lines enclosing a thicker yellow line. The colophon of the manuscript bears the date and states that it was copied for some Kalhora prince.

(110) *Archaeology of Sind*, P. 32.

Mr. Idrees Siddiqui pointed out that "these miniatures are distinguished from those of other contemporary schools of paintings by certain unique features. The composition is simple and the colour scheme is not sophisticated. The architecture is rendered in dark-brown and white. Other characteristics include cylindrical pillars and multicusped arches bearing resemblance to the paintings of Bikaner, Jaipur and Jodhpur in the 18th century. The wooden balconies represented in the miniature are nothing but a representation of residential houses of contemporary Thatta".[111]



Mr. Idrees Siddiqui has further said:

"Some more features, characteristics of Sind, in these paintings are the principal men figures who look like Sindhi landlords, with well-cut features and muscular body draped in distinctive attire. Faces are shown in three quarter profile. The colour and design of textiles in the miniature also resemble those of Sind. The turban is peculiarly Sindhi which is made of either Ajrak or of Lungi. The hair style also indicates Sindhi character.

Similarly, the female type conforms to the Sindhi girl as described by Burton. The faces of maids are in full profile. The costumes worn by the females are also typically Sindhi. All these features combined together in these miniatures, prompted a serious scholar to come to the conclusion that there was a Sindhi school of painting which was contemporary to the Rajput and Deccani paintings and these paintings were the representative specimens of that school. One may agree or disagree with the conclusion but the illustrated manuscript bears a positive proof that Thatta was once a centre of book production as well as of miniature paintings.[112]

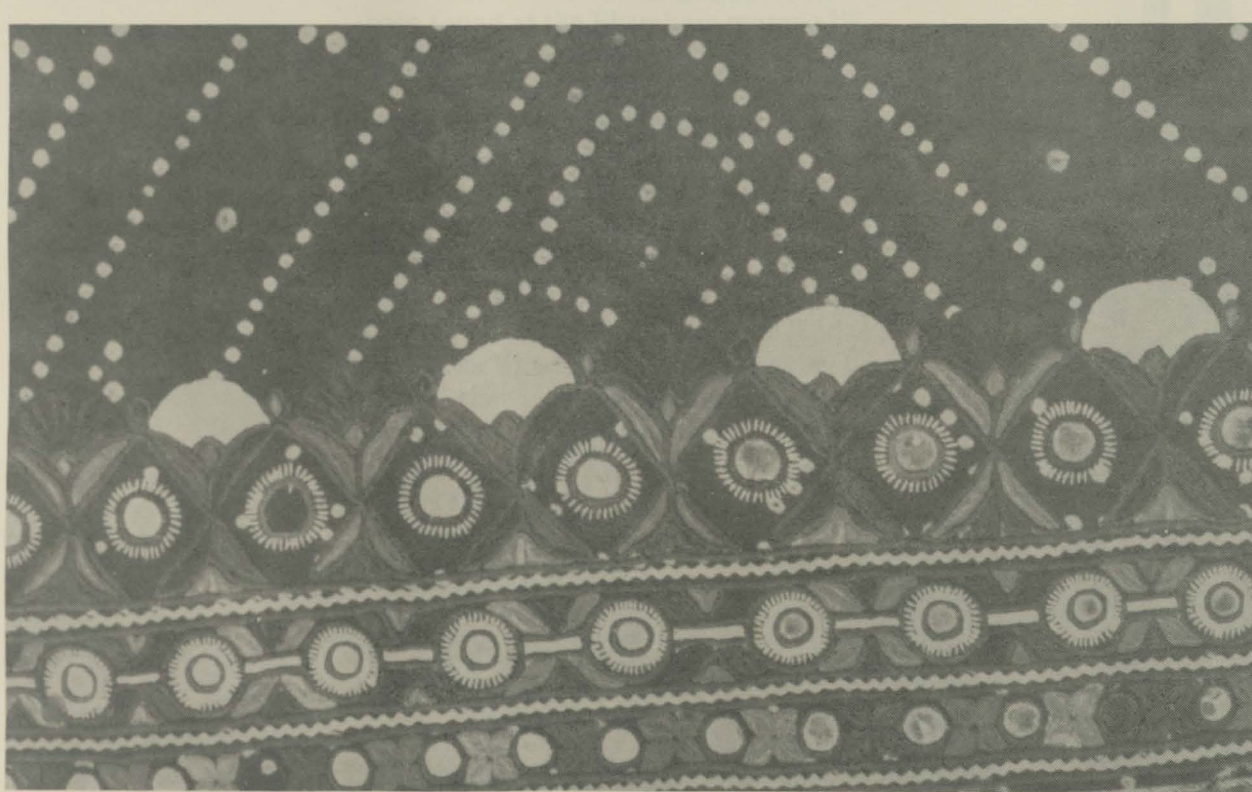
(111) *Archaeology of Sind*, P. 33.

(112) *Archaeology of Sind*, P. 33.

A miniature painting depicting the court of Miyan Noor Mohammad Kalhoro was printed in black and white in Tohfat-al-Kiram edited by Sayid Hussamuddin Rashdi.[113] In this painting the portraits of Miyan Noor Mohammad Kalhoro, a ruler of Sind and his son Miyan Mohammad Murad Khan Abbasi are shown. This painting indicates a semi-Mughal art of painting. The artist seems to have been influenced by the Mughal tradition of painting but at the same time he has tried to paint the impressions of a local school of painting. Miyan Noor Mohammad Kalhoro is shown in Mughal attire but Miyan Mohammad Murad is shown in Sindhi dress. There is some difference in their turbans. Miyan Mohammad Murad is shown wearing the turban of a Baloch tribal chief where as Miyan Noor Mohammad is shown wearing the turban of Mughal style. The complexion of the face of Miyan Mohammad Murad is typical of a Balochi chief. The king is shown sitting in a courtyard with a balcony of carved stones. This balcony reminds us of the balcony of the Khudabad mosque. The miniature painting depicts flora and fauna, a tree in full blossom indicating spring, and a swan by the side of a pool, all enclosed within an illuminated floral border. The size is 7.0" x 4.4". It was painted in the early 19th century.[114]

(113) Ali Sher Qan'ee, *Tohfat-ul-Kiram*, ed: Pir Hussamuddin Shah Rashdi, Jamshoro, Sindhi Adabi Board, 1971, PP 542–564 & 596.

(114) Archaeology of Sind, Op. Cit, P. 71.





Calligraphy

From the points discussed so far, it is obvious that Muslim culture has influenced every aspect of Sindhi society and Sindhian way of life. The art of Sind has also been much influenced by Islamic art. Decorative styles from different Islamic centres were spread and introduced by different scholars and artists in Sind. A wave of Islamic missionaries, traders and eventually conquerors came from Arabia, Damascus and from other Islamic areas to Sind from the mid-7th century onwards. Along with other decorative arts, the Arabs introduced the art of calligraphy as a decorative element, and became characteristic of Islamic art.[115] The earliest form of calligraphy in Sind has been found at the Bhambore mosque.[116]

The artists of Sind took keen interest in the art of calligraphy on stone and paper. The rulers, princes and other art-lovers encouraged this art. The calligraphers of Sind became experts in Kufic, Naskh and Nasta'liq styles of calligraphy from the days of the Soomra and Sama dynasties. The shrines of Shaikh Turbai at Gujo near Thatta is worth mentioning here, where the oldest specimen of Nasta'liq calligraphy in Persian was found on a stone.[117]

(115) *Threadlines,* P. 17.

(116) The stone slabs on which the earliest specimen of calligraphy found in Sind at Bhambore, are lying in Bhambore Museum.

(117) This stone has now been shifted to the Sind Museum at Hyderabad.





The calligraphy on the shrines and graves at Chaukundi, Sonda, Makli graveyard, Miyun Wahiyun graveyard, Satain-Jo-Than near Rohri, Mangho Pir, Raj Malik graveyard, and Chorlo graveyard are worth mentioning. The earliest specimen of the Sindhi artist's calligraphy in Arabic and Persian and in Nasta'liq and Naskh script draws the attention of scholars and art lovers. These specimens are exemplary of an artistic and creative approach.

Thatta has remained the centre of calligraphers. Many of the calligraphers of Thatta had migrated from Iran and took permanent abode in Sind. There are various specimens of Naskh and Sulus inscriptions carved on stone or traced in coloured tiles on various monuments in Sind. On the monument of Jam Nindo, the calligraphy is in bold Naskh style in decorative design. The work done at the tomb of Mirza Issa, the first, Mirza Mohammad Baqi, Mah-Begum, Mirza Issa Tarkhan, the second, and Mirza Jan Baba exhibit the best examples of calligraphy of the days of Arghuns and Tarkhan rule in Sind.

The calligraphers who worked on the Shah Jehan Mosque at Thatta were local artists from Thatta. They were definitely not brought from outside Sind. M.A. Ghafoor has given the names of eminent artists and calligraphers who worked on the Shah Jehan Mosque at Thatta. He says:

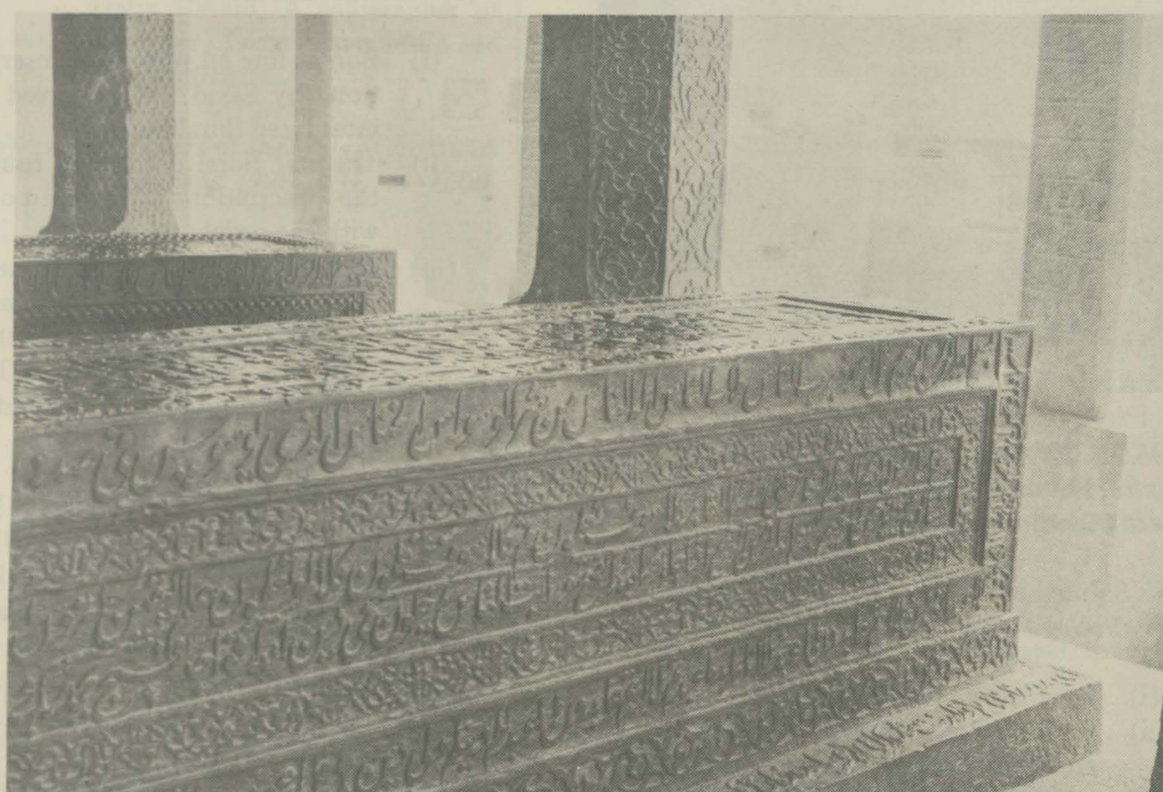
> "Tahir bin Hasan bin Rukunnuddin[118] was a calligrapher of no mean distinction. Quoting Ali Sher Qan'ee, he says, his earliest signed specimen is found on a ceiling tile of the Shahi Masjid at Thatta, beside his father".[119]

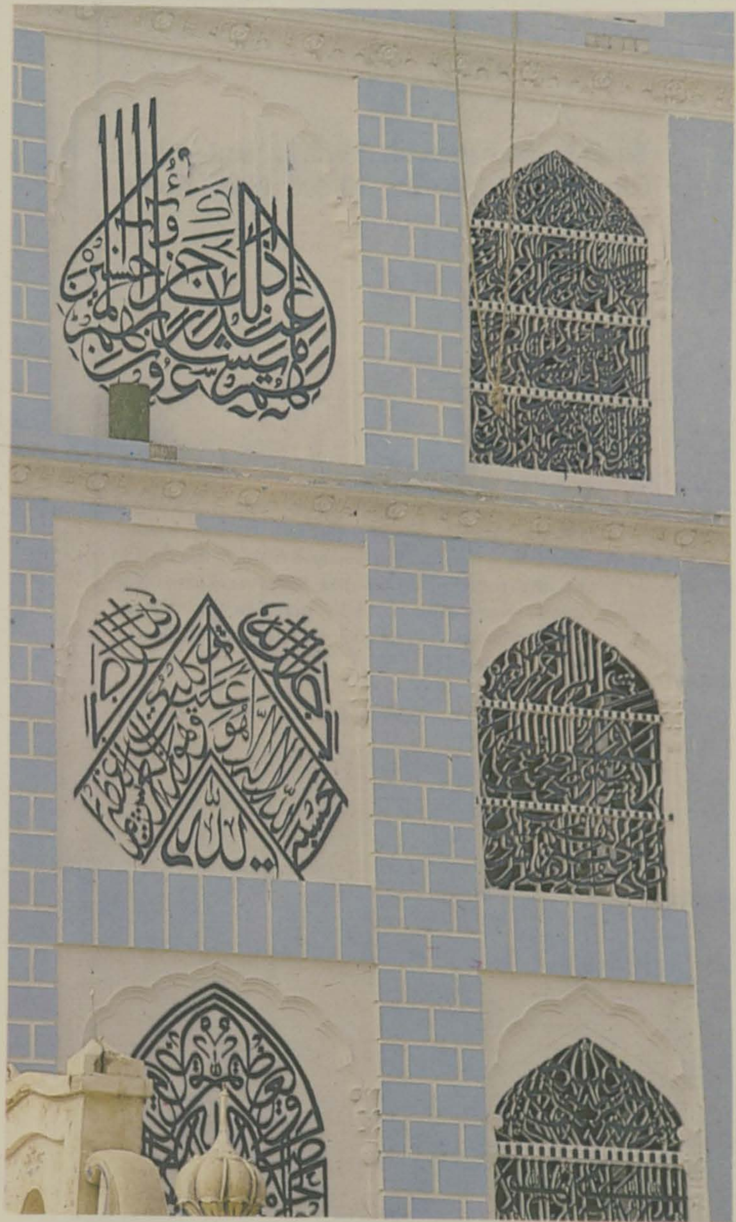
Other calligraphers mentioned by M.A. Ghafoor were: Bhambu bin Hasan, brother of Tahir bin Hasan, Sayid Ali, Shaikh Muhammad Fadhil, and Abdul Ghafur bin Shaikh Abdul Wasi Abdullah.[120]

(118) Hasan bin Rukhnnuddin earned fame as a calligrapher during the rule of Tarkhans. He was commissiond to write the Quranic and historic inscription on the tomb of Mirza Issa Khan Tarkhan. The latest inscription signed by him was the Quranic inscription on the mosque of Shah Jehan at Thatta, dated 1068 A.H./1658.

(119) Ghafoor M.A., *Calligraphers of Thatta,* Karachi, 1978, P. 59.

(120) Ibid.





M.A. Ghafoor has given some more details of the calligraphy on the following graves at Makli:

(a) *Shrine of Shah Hassan Arghuns (938 A.H./1538)*

(i) Inter-laced creeper motifs.
(ii) Both borders on top and bottom are interspersed with arabesque and undulating floral scrolls.

(b) *Sultan Ibrahim (961 A.H./1554)*

The inscription is enclosed within a floral border and the floral designs are drawn in black against the white background.

(c) *Tomb of Mirza Baqi Tarkhan (992 A.H./1584)*

The basic form of the letters is in Naskh with floral background.

(d) *Tomb of Shrufa Khan (1040 A.H./1638)*

(i) The tomb is elaborately decorated with Quranic inscription and floral designs.
(ii) The upper part of the stone is decorated with the multi-cuspid arches and a sun-flower at the centre with rosettes at each corner.

(e) *Shah Jehan Mosque*

(i) Border line all round the inscription (by Sayid Ali) is carved in inter-laced floral designs.
(ii) The star floral designs all round the inscription is in harmony with the script.
(iii) The middle part of the stone is divided into six compartments by two horizontal chain bands and one vertical band. The border is sumptuously decorated with geometrical designs.

On the tomb of Miyan Yar Mohammad Kalhoro (d. 1131 A.H./1718) the calligraphy of the Quranic inscription, particularly, the throne verses, are traced on tile. The specimen of Sulus and the Naskh script are also shown.[121]

(121) Shaikh Khurshid Hassan, Op. Cit, P. 35.

The calligraphers of Sind tried their skill on paper, cloth, garments, ornaments, buildings, tombs, wooden doors, handles of swords and on many other objects. Different styles of writing such as Tughra, Gulzar, Rihan, Shafia, Bahar and Ghubar were invented by the calligraphers of Sind. The use of beautiful inscription as decorative design on mosque, and shrines was also very common in Sind.[122]

Mir Masoom Bakhri, Ali Sher Qan'ee and other historians have mentioned the names of eminent calligraphers and scribes of their days. Some of the names pointed by these historians are given below:

(a) *Calligraphers of Samma period (752 A.H. to 925 A.H.) – 1351 to 1521.*

Hafiz Rashid, A calligrapher of the days of Jam Nizamuddin and Jam Feroze.

(b) *Calligraphers of the days of Arghuns and Tarkhans (926 A.H. to 1000 A.H.)*[123]

(i) Sayid Hassan.
(ii) Sayid Mohammad Tahir bin Sayid Hassan.
(iii) Makhdoom Ilyas bin Makhdoom Yusuf. He was well known for Khate-Naskh and Nasta'liq. Sayid Ali was one of his students.
(iv) Sayid Rahmatullah bin Sayid Qasim Beglar. He was known as an expert in Khate-Nasta'liq.
(v) Shaikh Mohammad Fadhil. He was well known for Khate-Sulus.
(vi) Shuja Thattavi – He was well known for Khate-Sulus and Naskh.

(c) *Calligraphers of Mughal period in Sind 1000 A.H. to 1212 A.H. 1592 A.D. to 1700 A.D.*[124]

(i) Mulla Habibullah bin Mulla Halla, Korejo.
(ii) Sayid Ali – He was a student of Makhdoom Ilyas. Sayid Ali produced the students whose names are mentioned below.
(iii) Mir Masoom of Bakhar (d. 1605 A.D.), Shaikh Mohammad Ali Shaikh Abdul Fadhil, Shaikh Mohammad Panah, Shaikh Mohammad Aslam S/o Shaikh Mohammad Panah (1187 A.H.), Maqtul al Yadain. He was a skilful calligrapher. He was such an expert in this art that preparing false royal documents was an easy task for him. As a punishment, both his hands were cut down but he continued his professional art by holding the pen with his arms. There are two manuscripts in his handwriting.[125] One of them was transcribed by him after the punishment. Shaikh Abdul Wasi, Abdul Samee (S/o Shaikh Abdul Wasi, Abdul Ghafoor S/o Shaikh Abdul Wasi, Shaikh Abdul Karim (1140 A.H.) Makhdoom Mohammad Hashim Thattavi (1127 A.H.) Mir Buzrug S/o Mir Mohammad Masoom Bakhari.

(122) Ghafoor M.A., Op. Cit, P. 59.

(123) Mirza Qaleech Beg: *Qadeem Sind, unja Mashhoor Shahr and Manhun,* Hyderabad, Sindhi Adabi Board, 1981, P. 167.

(124) Mirza Qaleech Beg, Op. Cit.

(125) Hidayatullah Siddiqui, an article: "Manuscripts, Calligraphy and Inscriptions".

(d) *Calligraphers of Kalhora days. (1112 A.H. to 1198 A.H.) 1700 A.D. to 1783 A.D.*

(i) Akhund Haroon Muta'lvi (113 A.H.).
(ii) Mohammad Bachal Thattavi (1142 A.H.).
(iii) Ghaus Mohammad S/o Sher Mohammad Abbasi (1148 A.H.).
(iv) Mohammad Sharif S/o Mula Talib Thattavi (1153 A.H.).
(v) Sayid Jaffer bin Sayid Mohammad Baqr Al-Hussaini (1164 A.H.).
(vi) Akhund Shaikh Nathoo S/o Shaikh Fateh Mohammad (1186 A.H.).
(vii) Mohammad Ali bin Mula Siddiq (1196 A.H.).

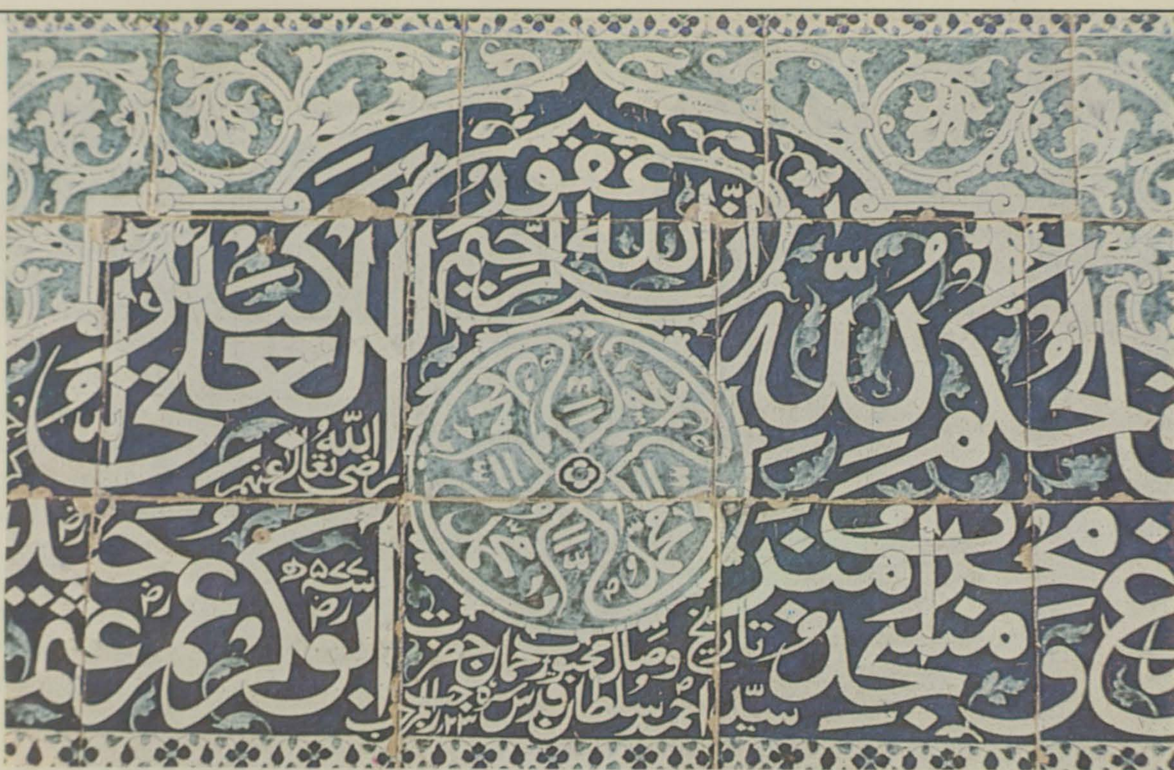
(e) *Calligraphers of Talpur period. (1198 A.H. to 1259 A.H.) 1783 to 1843.*

(i) Miyan Mohammad Hussain Soomro of Chio, Pad Iddan (1209 A.H.).

(ii) Mohammad Arif bin Mohammad Fazal (1224 A.H.).
(iii) Mirza Hassan Shirazi (1228 A.H.).
(iv) Agha Mir Hussain Naqqash (1248 A.H.).
(v) Mohammad Jio Hallai (1250 A.H.).
(vi) Sayid Ali bin Sayid Hassan Shirazi (1252 A.H.).
(vii) Zulfiqar al Hussaini S/o Agha Ismail Shah (he was the foreign minister of Mir Karam Ali Khan Talpur).
(viii) Mohammad Afzal Faqi Mahesar of Kamal Dero (1257 A.H.).
(ix) Akhund Fazal Ali of Nasarpur (1268 A.H.).
(x) Sayid Hyder Shah S/o Sayid Mir Ali Shah (1276 A.H.).
(xi) Rahmatullah S/o Abdul Rasheed Naurang of District Larkana (1276 A.H.).
(xii) Faqir Bilwal Mari (1281 A.H.).
(xiii) Mirza Qurban Ali Beg Gurji of Tando Thorho.
(xiv) Mirza Budhal Beg of Tando Agha.
(xv) Mirza Qurban Ali Beg S/o Mirza Qasim Ali Beg of Tando Agha.
(xvi) Mirza Fateh Ali Beg, the transcriber of Surat-al-Ikhlas in Tughra style.

There are varieties of Naskh and Sulus inscriptions carved on stone or traced in colour on tiles on various monuments at Thatta, Hyderabad and other places in Sind. The two bands of Quranic inscriptions around the stone wall of Jam Nizamuddin in bold Naskh are the monumental examples of the vitality of Arabic script for its use as a decorative design. The specimens of inscriptions in Nasta'liq script can also be observed on a number of monuments. The most charming one is at the tomb stone of Nawab Saifullah Khan (d. 1143 A.D.).[126]

(126) Shaikh Mohammad Hassan, "Decorative Art", an article published in Archaeology of Sind, op. cit, P. 37.



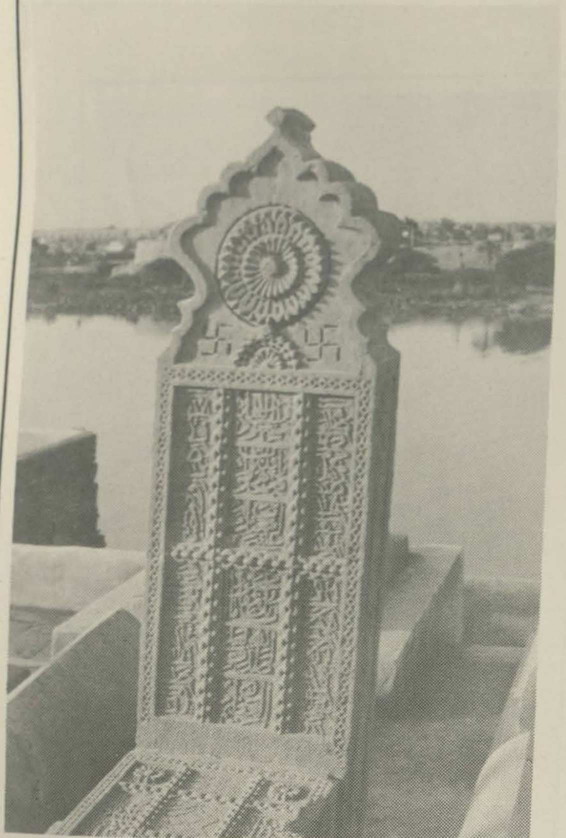
The people of Sind took keen interest in the art of illuminated calligraphy. The art of illuminating books was encouraged by the rulers, princes, Sajadah-Nashins of Darghas and other art lovers. There developed many public as well as private libraries where calligraphers, scribes and illuminators were engaged in this decorative art. The manuscripts collected by the Talpurs at Hyderabad, Pir Jhando Library, the library at Pir-Jo-Goth, Central Library of Sind University, Sindhi Adabi Board, Institute of Sindhology, Sind Provincial Museum, Shah Walliullah Academy Library, Sind Provincial Library, Hyderabad, Public Library Khairpur, the library of Mohammad Hanif Siddique, Saeed Siddique of Shikarpur, Maulana Ghulam Mustafa Qasimi, Kotri Kabir and several other private libraries in Rohri, Shikarpur and Thatta hold many illuminated manuscripts which were written by the scribes of Sind.



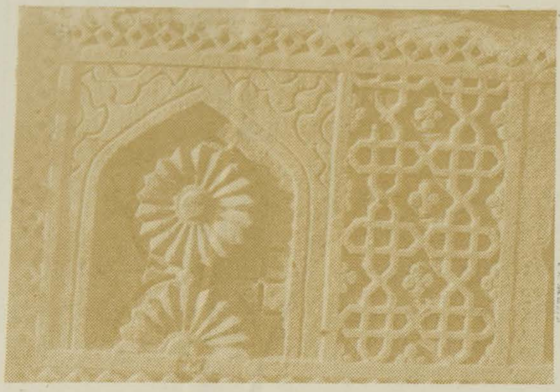
WOOD AND STONE CARVING

The art of wood carving developed in the Indus Valley from very early days. It is fair to presume that the artists who produced the little figurine of the dancing girl, or the vital rendering of animal forms on the stealite seals, represented an aesthetic capacity more broadly based than the recovered examples of it alone indicates. Monuments with figural representations are found in Sind, and are located at different places. The first century of the Christian era marked the rise of stone masons whose work survived throughout the Gandhara Valley and parts of Sind. They relied considerably on the skill of stone carvers to beautify the facedes, arches and columns of massive temples and palaces. The traditions received a great boost under the Muslim rulers. For obvious reasons, the art of sculpture declined although it was never wholly abandoned.

The main task of the stone craftsmen was to design and decorate columns and arches of palaces and mosques. The remains at Bhambore and Mansura include many eight century pieces of carvings. These are amongst the earliest specimens of Muslim stone carving in Sind. In Sind, the stone craftsmen found an opportunity to embellish not only the religious buildings and halls of the rich but also the resting places of the poor. Old burial grounds in these regions reveal the widespread use of human and animal figures on the top and side slabs of graves, so as to indicate the sex, status and calling of the persons buried there. This led to the rise of the whole community of carvers and engravers who worked on pan els displaying houses, riders in the act of throwing the spear, or warriors in battle dress, or embossed birds of peace, women's ornaments, and floral patterns.







The earliest Arabs to arrive in Sind brought the art of calligraphy. This can be witnessed on stone and the many tombs built between the eight and eighteenth centuries. Verses from the Holy Quran were finely carved. The Sindhi tradition of stone carving was considerably enriched by the art of calligraphy and arabesque pattern introduced by the Arabs soon after their arrival. We have the earliest specimen of carving from the capital of Soomra dynasty (1057–1351) of Sind. A specimen found at Mahm-tur is lying in the museum of the Institute of Sindhology. Afterwards, we have examples of this art at Thatta, continuously from the 14th century A.D. It started with the construction of the building of the tomb of Hamad Jamali by Jam Tughluq. The tradition has continued to the present day.

The workmanship on the graves in the Thatta region, especially at Chaukundi, Sonda and Makli are of a much higher quality. Sculptural representations of men, animals and birds are common. Many panels in low relief show warriors on horseback equipped with different weapons. All the carving is done on sandstone, acquired from the Jungshahi mountains, near Thatta. The craftsmen worked with simple tools, such as a hammer and a chisel to carve various patterns and designs. Thatta carvings have been called "Lace Work" in stone. If each individual panel of the whole design is carefully examined it seems as if tile work has been rendered in stone[127] and the painter's brush has been converted into the artist's chisel.

In Mrs. Bunting's view, "Many of the carvings on stones represent the same designs seen in the jewellery and textiles as well as the wood work and pottery of today. Some of these designs have persisted from the days of the Indus Valley Civilization. The interlocking circle found on a vase at Mohen-Jo-Daro is also found on a modern 'khes' from Jaccobabad, as well as on many tombs. The circle, square, triangle, diamond, pyramid and other geometric patterns are repeated on both tombs and textiles in all their variations. Even embroidery stitches are repeated in stone: the herringbone, interlacing, chain, satin, couching, button hole, zigzag and feather stitch are all present.[128] Every visible inch of stone is covered with small, fine, geometric designs reminiscent of the mirror work on the costumes of Jokhias, Lohanas and Rajputs.[129] For carving, two techniques are employed. In one, the design, a fine filligree-work, is carved in relief on the background, which is sunk. In the other, the background is raised and the design is incised in the dressed surface of the stone. The whole scheme thus provides a very pleasant effect of light and shade.[130]

The tomb stones and graves are generally very elaborately carved with geometric patterns and inter-laced Arabic inscriptions.[131] The pillars are richly carved in

(127) Idrees, S. M. Siddiqui, *Thatta*, Op. Cit, P. 12.

(128) Ethel-Jane W. Bunting, Op. Cit, P. 65.

(129) Ibid, P. 13.

(130) Ibid.

(131) Idrees M. Siddiqui, *Thatta*, Op. Cit, PP. 13, 15 and 16 & 17.

arabesque work, and are surrounded by honey-combed capitals. The lotus bloom and sun-flower are carved in relief in the ni ches. The stones are carved with Quranic inscriptions, floral and geometric designs. Most of the decoration is interlaced with arabesques. The decorative motifs are lotus-blossom and arched pan els with sun-flowers. The stone slabs are dressed and profusely carved with floral and geometrical designs.[132]

The tomb of Jam Nizamuddin (1461—1509 A.D.) is a stone structure with the finest ornamental carving, akin to fifteenth century Gujrat style. Its decoration consists of bands of stone carved in relief running around the walls, and representing half and full lotuses, arched panels set with sun-flowers, calling to mind the Muslim buildings around Ahmedabad in Gujrat. Its mehrab is surrounded by a balcony and continuing carved pillars including a miniature sikhara together with panels and ornamentation. The details of designs are of considerable importance as an example of Gujrat and local stone carving. Internally, most of the decoration is a flat technique in interlaced arabesque. The decorative motifs of this mausoleum consist of half and full lotus and arched panels set with sun-flowers. A band of Quranic inscriptions in fine calligraphy is side by side with a band of carved geese.

Similarly, the tombs of Mirza Issa Tarkhan (the first of the Tarkhan rulers), Mirza Mohammad Baqi, Mirza Issa (the second — d. 1680), and several of the Mughal Governors of Thatta and Jan Baba are the specimens of stone carvings, not only in Sind but throughout Pakistan. The honey-comb designs and arabesque patterns are the main subject of Mirza Issa's shrine. On Jan Baba's tomb the Swastika, sun-flowers, geometric patterns and arabesque are the main designs.

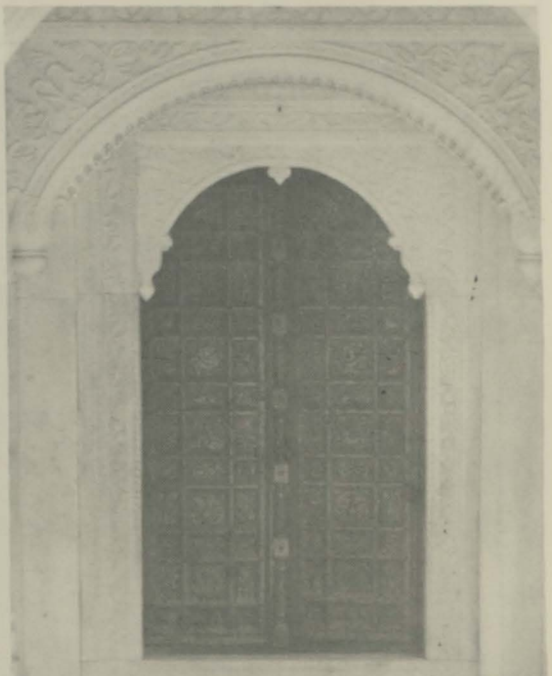
(132) Shaikh Khurshid Hassan *"Decorative Art"*, an article published in Archaeology of Sind, Op. Cit., P. 37.



WOOD CARVING & WOOD WORK

In the sub-continent, the first art experience might have been on wood. In constructing places of worship, palaces and houses, wood was the main material used. In the earlier stone architecture, the signs of wood-work technique are visible. Those craftsmen who worked in wood, found it difficult, in changing to stone to completely forget their old style. The wood and stone carvers belong to the same caste.

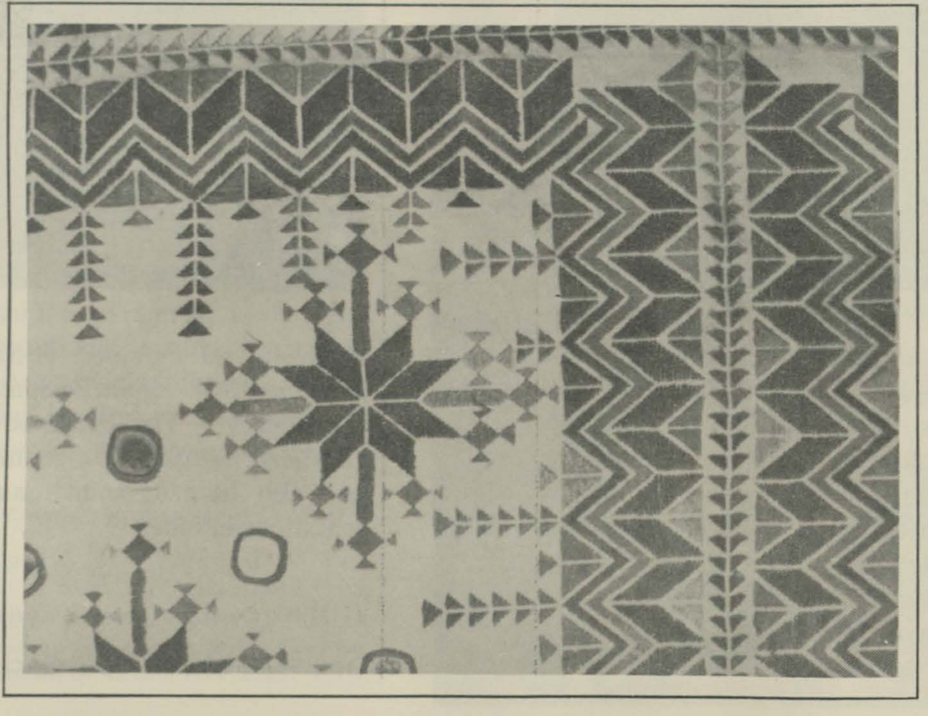
The study of wood work is interesting for its diversity. The streams of civilizations brought forth varied styles. Elaborate carving with extraordinary precision and accuracy is characteristic of wood work. Designs are floral, sometimes geometrical too. In places of worship, shrines and in sacred monuments, mythological motifs are commonly used. In the temples of Hindus and Jains the figures of their deities were also made from wood. The Muslims of Sind perpetuated this art from an artistic point of view. The wood work at Bara-Alam and Qadir Bux Ja Quba, both at Khairpur Mir's, is witness to this claim.



Wood carving is done in architecture as well as in the making of furniture and household utensils. The beauty of carving, apart from the craftsmanship, style and designs depends also on the texture of timber. The wood carver has to select a suitable variety for making a particular kind of article. A durable variety is used for the roof. For utensils and for other household things emphasis is laid more on the beauty of the timber than its durability. Even now, the artists find wood a convenient medium for beautifying houses, door frames and windows. Carved wooden furniture, like bedsteads, chairs, tables, stools, lamp-stands, combs and small boxes are popular items in every house in Sind.

In Sind, this art is practised by both Hindu and Muslim craftsmen on the Pinjara of shrines, taboots, doors of mosques, temples and panels and is remarkable. The panels are usually in Pinjara work. The overdoor appears to be a balcony carried forward on contiliner brackets. Some of the older examples at the temples of Nagarparkar, Sadh-Belo, Uderolal, shrines of Qalander Shahbaz, Shah Latif, Sachal and the tombs of Kalhora, Talpur rulers of Hyderabad and Khairpur, are exquisite examples of master craftsmanship.

The art of inlaying wood is also very common in Sind. It is used for the decoration of furniture. Wood inlay is not practised independently but only as a part of wood craft. The materials used for inlaying wood are zangi gul, ivory, bone, and metals like copper and brass wire. The method of inlaying depends upon the particular article under work. This work is done in Shikarpur, but Khudabadi (Khudawadi) carpenters were also very well known for this kind of work before 1947.



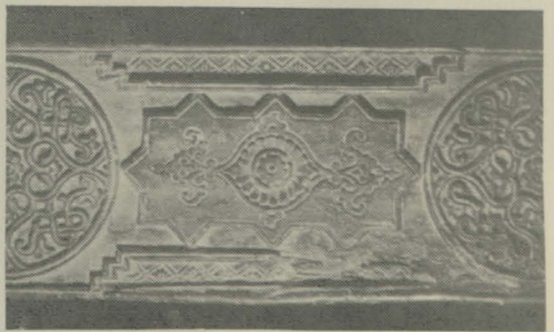
Signs Symbols And Motifs Of The Art Of Sind And Their Significance

A symbol is a sign indicating a particular object or concept. The significance is not immediately apparent to the uninitiated because the abbreviation often reaches such a degree of abstraction that it is impossible to immediately associate the symbol with the original model.



Experts and scholars have distinguished several types of signs and symbols, according to their shapes, (claviform, square, bell-shaped, circular human and other figures) in various forms of Sindhian art. In Wheeler's view "More pictorial motifs include intersecting circles or derivative, leaf-patterns, scales, chequers, lattice-work, kidney-shaped designs, comb patterns, wave patterns variegated by cross hatching, semi-naturalistic forms, notably palms, pipal trees and rosette-like floral units. Peacocks, sometimes, appear singly or in super-imposed series, and fish are represented".[133]

The painted designs on the pottery found in the Bhambore excavations include friezes of stylised ducks, water fowl , cranes, fish, snakes, peacocks with elaborate hatchured tails, and stylised geometric patterns like the rising sun and host of related motifs in black, red and dark brown colours on cream or dull red slip. The stylised birds are invariably shown against a dotted background. A large number of



stamped and moulded pottery has been recovered from Hindu Sassanian levels from Bhambore. The stamped designs are generally confined to geometric patterns and also human, animal and bird representations in relief.[134]

(133) Wheeler M. *The Indus Civilization*, Op. Cit, P. 95.

(134) Shaikh Khurshid Hassan, Op. Cit.

The large collection of pottery recovered shows a great variety of decorative patterns representing mostly floral designs, but there are also other motifs. A dancing couple and an elephant in naturalistic style deserve special mention.[135]

Taking the decoration of these objects into account, it becomes clear that there are two main groups of signs and symbols which are mixed up. On the one hand there are geometric ornamental decorations, and on the other, there are symbolic and stylised objects.

In the view of Mrs. Bunting, "The most interesting aspect of the tombs is carving of the figures, jewellery and weapons, which so vividly portrays the warlike people, their customs and their wealth. An equally fascinating aspect of the carving is the similarity of the geometric designs to the decorative motifs of the textiles of the Sind Valley.[136]

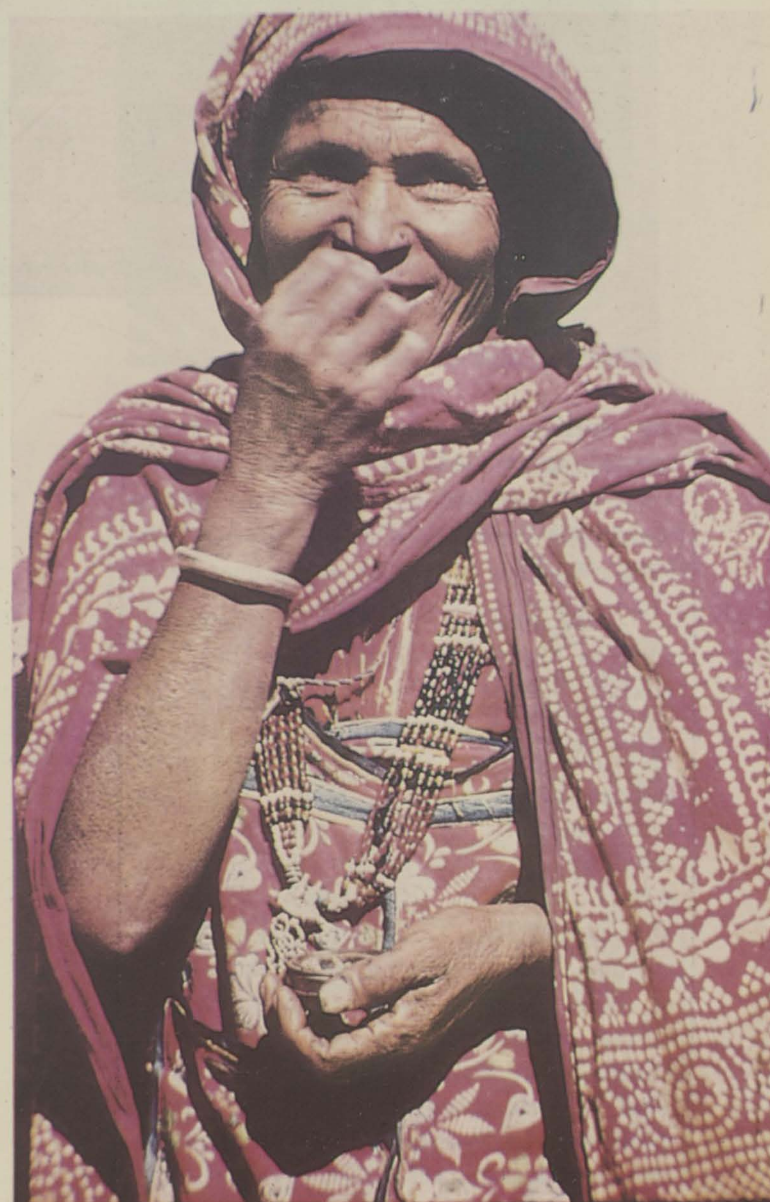
It has been said earlier that there are many sculptural representations of men, animals and birds on the tombs at different places in Sind. Human figures, depicting warriors on horseback with weapons, have been carved in low relief on the gravestones at Thatta, Sonda, Jhirak, Aungar, Gujo, Raj Malik, Chaukundi, Chorlo and Nagarparkar. They may be dated to the 15th and 16th centuries. These tombs are built of sand-stone. They are made of regular super-imposed slabs. The size of the slabs diminishes in the descending order, so as to present a pyramidal look. The slabs are dressed and exquisitely carved with floral and geometrical designs.[137] The most interesting features of these slabs are the figural themes. Human figures depict-

(135) Khan, F.A. *Bhambore Excavation,* Op. Cit, P. 34.

(136) Ethel-Jane, W. Bunting, Op. Cit, p. 2.

(137) Ghafoor, M.A. *"The Calligraphers of Thatta"* Karachi, Institute of Central and West Asian Studies, University of Karachi, 1978, P. 24.







ing warriors on horseback with swords, spears, bows and arrows, and musical instruments carved in low relief on gravestones are found at Thatta, Sonda, Chaukundi and Gujo.

The presence of women's ornaments, such as bracelets, necklaces, ear-rings and anklets, indicate the graves belong to women. The representation of turbans, materials of war and weapons are signs indicating the graves of men. There are representations of birds and snakes in relief on the lintels of the pavilion which stands close by the tomb of Mirza Mohammad Baqi Tarkhan at Makli. These are also found scattered in different parts of Sind, such as Makli, Sonda, Hellaya village, Jungshahi, Gujo, Raj Malik, Chaukundi, Malir, Mango Pir, Sud-Sudderan Jo Thul, Chrolo graveyard, Bhodesar graveyard near Nagarparkar[138] and Jain temples also near Nagarparkar.

The distinguished features of figural themes invariably indicate that the builders of these tombs were warriors and hunters. Henry Cousens observed parallel graves in Kathiawar and Kutch.[139] Archaeological survey in Baluchistan brought to light the same type of tombs at Sindian in Lasbel a.[140] Some of the tiles bear the figures of men, ploughing with a yoke of oxen and others with representations of peacocks and snakes.[141]

(138) The graves at this graveyard are built of burnt bricks.

(139) Cousens, H. *Antiquities of Sind,* 1929, PP. 164 and 165.

(140) Archaeological Survey of India Report, 1902-03, PP. 212–17.

(141) Cousens Op. Cit, PP. 24.

Cousens further states: "We also come across representation of birds and snakes in relief on the lintel of pavilions which stand close by the tomb of Mirza Mohammad Baqi Tarkhan, in Makli, Thatta. It is simple in plan and is, indeed, without any architectural pretension. The pavilion, made of dressed sand-stone and supported by eight columns, forms an octagon. Each side of the octagon measures 5″ — 5″. The dome is made of corbels and is flat in shape, surmounted by a Kalasa. The structural parts and the technique betray Hindu elements which represent a continuous tradition of workmanship in Sind and Gujrat since pre-Islamic times".[142] The interior of the dome is carved with geometric designs. Similarly, the inner face of the lintel above the capital is carved with floral scroll and geometric designs. A tablet measuring 3½″ x 1.3″ just above the capital of the north-west column bears the relief of a stylized peacock perched on a snake, holding the neck of a snake in its beak. Another tablet of the same size above the capital of the south-west column bears, in relief, the representation of two birds facing each other in an heraldic fashion.

There are other interesting examples of figural representations such as a cenotaph in Makli, carved with figural scenes along with a dated inscription. The top surface is divided into two panels of different dimensions with a circular hole on the upper-most zone. The upper panel contains a full-blown eight petalled lotus in low relief, bounded with a pearled-band margin. The lower panel measuring 1.9″ includes a stylized conical tree, at the base of which are two goats holding something in their mouths in the heraldic posture. These quardrupeds are in semi-rampant



posture. On the upper part of the tree are perched two ducks in the same heraldic way. On the top of the tree two peacocks facing each other with their plumage raised are carved in flying posture with their beaks holding a curious object. The upper part of the panel is bordered by a pair of eight petalled rosettes. The intermediate space between the two flowers is filled with a lozenge cartouche containing what appears to be a fruit motif".[143] The southern end of the cenotaph has a panel containing the historical three line inscription in the Persian language. It says. "The sparrow of the garden of paradise, Nur-al-Din Muhammad S/o Shah Mansur Hakim Tarbizi, died on the 25th of the

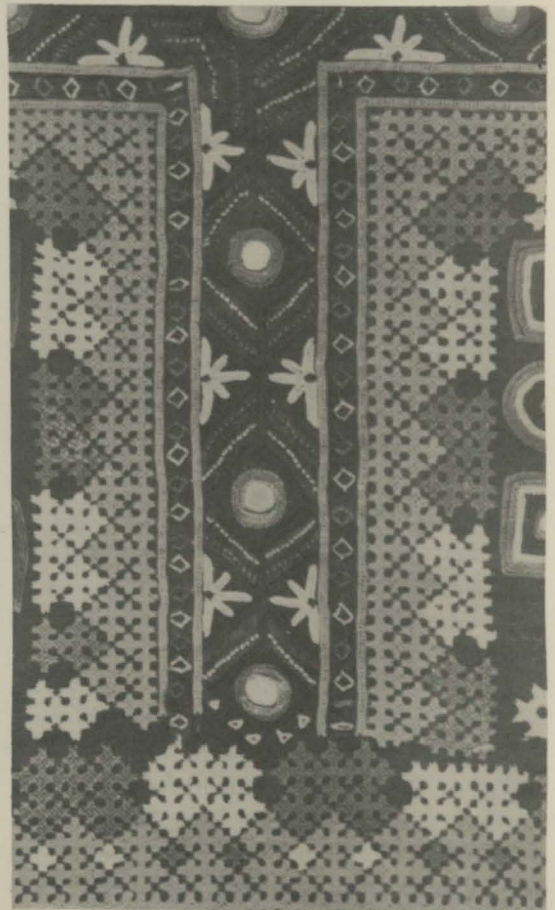
(142) Cousens, H. Op. Cit., P. 29.

(143) Cousens, H. Op. Cit, P. 30.

month of Zul-Hajj the sacred, in the year nine hundred and forty eight (April, 1542 A.D.). The most striking feature that draws our attention to the tomb is the conical tree flanked by birds, for it undoubtedly represents the tree of life. The tree of life, as a symbol of fertility and immortality, is one of the most ancient and widely disseminated symbols in Western Asia. This theme has attracted inumerable scholars.[144] There is a general opinion among scholars that this motif has lost its symbolic value and has been reduced to the status of a mere decorative design in Muslim art.

Literary sources indicate that Indian literature from the earliest times contain references to the enemity between the eagle-like bird Garuda (گج) and the snake (Nag). Garuda is the carrier of God Vishnu. We also observe that the fight of Garuda and Naga is a favourite subject in the Gandhara Art. In such versions of this theme, the Naga appears in human form. With the teachings of Buddhism, the Garuda and Naga myth spread to the east and the south. But in the Indian classical art, however, the Garuda is represented as a sharp-beaked, eagle-like bird, and we seldom come across the representation of Garuda in the form of a peacock. But as to the origin of the peacock, it is mentioned in the Epic that the feather dropped by Garuda, when struck by Indra's thunder bolt, caused the creation of the peacock. The enemity between the serpent and the peacock is indeed a favourite theme of the Pancha Tantra.[145]

The Buddhist motifs of the birds of prey, carrying in its claws a snake, is represented in pre-Islamic Turkistan. The motifs perpetuated in Islamic Turkistan as well.[146] The occurrence of the bird carrying a serpent in its claws in Asia minor, Turkistan and Safavid Iran is nothing but a continuation of the Buddhist motifs which deeply influenced Central Asian art in the medieval period.



The figural representations on stone monuments of the Muslim period provide interesting information. The tomb-stones and graves are generally very elaborately carved with geometric patterns and designs. These carved graves are very important subjects for study. One of these is the tomb of Jam Nizamuddin at Makli. It was built in 1508 A.D. On this monument, above the balcony, there is a frieze of

(144) Wensink A.J. Trees and Birds as Cosmological Symbols in Western Asia, Amsterdam, 1921, PP. 28-29.
Also see: Lechler, *Tree of life in European and Islamic Culture, Arts, Islamica,* Vol: IV, PP. 396–416.

(145) Wensinke, A.J., Op. Cit, P. 32.

(146) Ibid.

geese running around the wall. The goose forms an interesting subject in Hindi and Sindhi literature. It represents the Vehicle of Brahma (Vahana of Brahma) and is mostly figured on religious monuments. In Buddhist literature, a goose is a Buddhist emblem and it occupies some honourable position in Brahmanical literature. This bird has been very well described in Sindhi literature and has been metaphorically described as a piousman, a sufi or a sage in our literature. The goose seems to be a popular decorative device from the time of Asoka to the Muslim period. The goose is a powerful bird with an established reputation for continuous flight. Its representation on tombs, therefore, might be the emblem of strength and power. According to the Shipla Shastra, the row of geese should be beautifully carved or painted in the temples of gods. Finding these features on the tomb, Henry Cousens suspected that it was built with the material acquired from a spoiled Hindu temple.[147] This view has been endorsed by Sir Mortimer Wheeler and other archaeologists as well. The reason for coming to such a conclusion was due, mainly to the notion that the Muslims are iconoclastic. Moreover, the goose had, since time immemorial, a specific place in fables and fairly tales of the sub-continent, including Sindhi folk literature. Similarly, sculptural representations on Muslim monuments also occur at Gujrat, with which the Samma rulers of Thatta had very close cultural relations.[148] It may also be observed that the representation of geese on these monuments is not in conformity with iconographical requirements as laid down by the Shipla-Shastra. Probably, the representation of geese on these tombs is traditional and decorative in nature. Similarly, the motifs of the palm tree refers to immortality. The snake is a symbol of cosmic victory since time immemorial. It is also associated with evil forces.

A crown represents the whole world. Its representation on the tombs might point to the bravery and valour of the deceased.

The figures of eagles occur frequently on ceramic vessels and on some ancient coins. The eagle with spread wings is a manifestation of divine protection, not only of man but also of both wild and domesticated animals who took refuge in his power. Where the eagle is depicted in flight, it appears to influence all creatures, a powerful bird symbolically superior to, yet protective towards the base

(147) Cousens, H. Op. Cit, P. 29.

(148) Ali Sher Qan'ee *Maklinama*, edited by Sayid Hussamuddin Shah Rashdi, Hyderabad, Sindhi Adabi Board,



earth. In the Parthian period and afterwards, the figure of an eagle was used in a variety of forms, on coins and vessels. The Parthians probably used the eagle as a symbol of supremacy and power.[149]

The lion has also been used as a symbol in Sind. The symbol of a lion is manifest on the buildings of Hindus in Sind and on the handles of daggers and swords. These are either engraved, or with handles themselves are made in the shape of lions.

On the graves at Sud-Sudderan there are some figures of either men holding the reigns of camels in their hands, or there are figures of camels only. On the same graves, the figures of men riding horses along with bows and swords in their hands can be seen. These figures are in low relief.

In the famous graveyard of Sonda, in the eastern corner, there are some graves on which the figures of musical instruments, such as the Dambooro, are carved. On one of the graves the name of a musician is also mentioned in calligraphy.

Mythological events are depicted either in part or as a whole, and sometimes legends can also be represented. The pictures often show symbols or geometric signs, or are placed inside such a sign. The inexperienced observer often sees them in an abstract way, although, they depcit, reality and have a very particular significance.

The motifs typical of the Thar Desert, in embroidery or rally work, preserve some of the decorative elements of the early Bronze age pottery of about 3500 to 2500 B.C. discovered in the pre-Indus Valley culture referred to as the first period culture, Nal in Baluchistan. The paintings on Nal pottery reveal the unique use of multi-coloured designs in red, black, white, yellow, green and blue.

Other motifs employed in contemporary textiles are traceable in the pottery excavated at Amri and Kot Diji, prehistoric sites in Sind. Checker-boards, fish-scale patterns with and without dots, mutliliner outlined rectangles and scallops, pipal leaves, chevrons, concentric circles with three rings, and sun motifs were common pottery decorations. They were usually painted on red and buff background in black and brown colour combinations during this period.[150]

(149) Zaibhollah, Safa, *"The Search for Historical facts in Iranian National Legends"*, an article published in Historical Studies of Iran, No. 3, Tehran, PP. 27–30.

(150) Threadlines, P. 8.

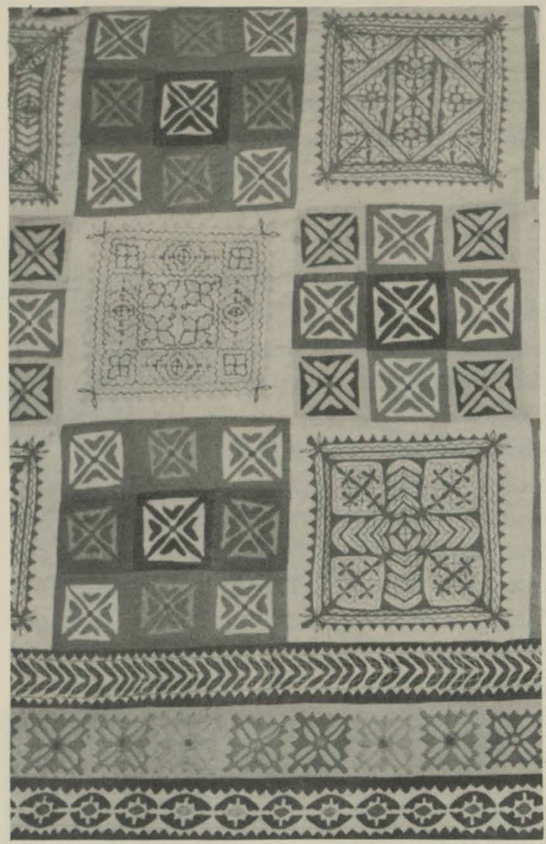


Many decorative elements from the pre-Indus culture period continue to appear during the Indus Valley culture period, while some are new variations, such as the intersecting circle and the sun motif. There are also many new motifs including the Swastika and the peacock. The highly stylized and sophisticated renderings of animals painted on pottery and engraved on stealite seals also add to the endless repertoire of motifs found in contemporary crafts.[151] Presumably, many of these motifs were symbols of specific religious beliefs. Examples of the highly evolved use of symbol as ornamentation is the trefoil on the tunic of the priest or nobleman. The trefoil is assumed to be composed of three sun-disks, fused together to represent the inseparable unity of the power of the gods of sun, water, and earth. The use of the triangle became part of the decorative composition of Sind and is preserved today in their repertoire of embroidery motifs.[152]

The symbolic significance of the lotus came from Buddhism.[153] The pipal leaf, signifying the sacred Buddhist bodhi tree, was an indigenous motif. The floral garlands and scrolls have Greek origin. The rosette became a universal Buddhist symbol associated with the lotus but there is no evidence of its origination.

We know the bird and snake to be symbols of cosmic victory and one of the most ancient and widely disseminated symbols of Western Asia. It appears on pottery and cut-stone of the earliest civilization of Elam and the Indus Valley. A stealite pendant discovered at Harappa shows an eagle with two snakes placed symmetrically above it wings.

Recent research has found that the symbol of the tree of life was adopted from the Sassanians. We may safely conclude that the association of the tree of life with the tomb and the grave is an expression of the yearning for paradise.[153]



Among other decorative elements are the spiral, peacocks and peacock feathers, and all sun symbols are said to be endowed with protective powers. The study of stylised motifs of birds and animals in our embroidery and bead work gives the details of mythology of all the religious faiths and superstition practised in Sind. According to the mythology of Sindhian people, a peacock is a sun bird, and is a symbol of longe vity. When a peacock is depicted on any corner of a triangular figure in embroidery, the corner of the triangular figure represents the peak of a mountain or a sand dune and the symbol of success, prosperity, and fertility. Similarly, the figure of a camel is a symbol of long life, success and longe vity.

(151) Threadlines, P. 8.

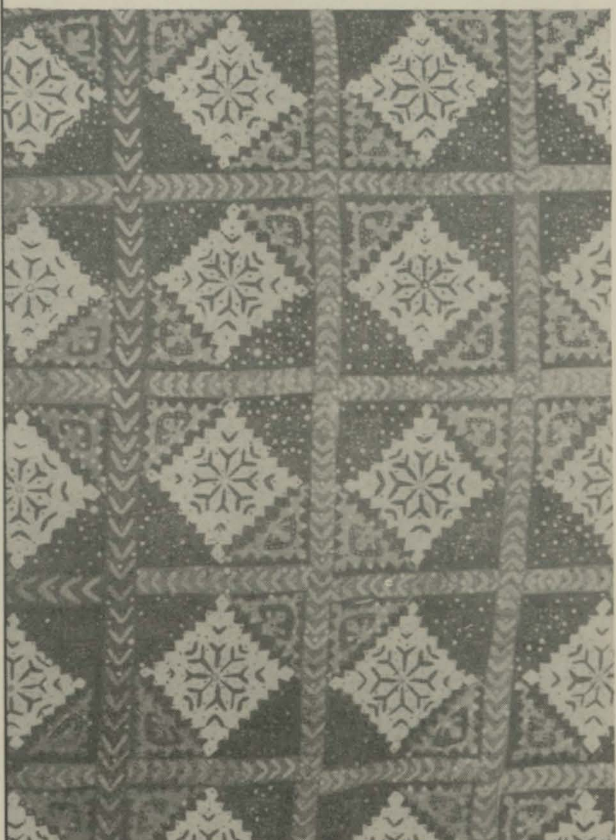
(152) Ibid, P. 10.

(153) Zaibhollah Safa, Op. Cit., PP. 27–30.

The motifs on the embroidered textiles in Sind derive largely from pre-Islamic, Hindu and Muslim geometries. The geometric motifs previously discussed are identi cal to those seen on the textile of Sind.

In the Thari embroidery a pattern of two triangular designs intersecting each other is very interesting. The triangles are surrounded by plant motifs. It is called Pal-ghat (پل گھاٹ). It represents a pictograph of the goddess of plant. Enclosed within a magical square, the goddess is both male and female. Formed of two triangles, the upper triangle is "ghat", the pot, as the female and the lower triangle is 'Pala', the mountain, as male. Thus, the compositional scheme continued to be inspired by religious and mystical belief.

The circle is the symbol of the sun, the centre of all life and energy, and the





symbol of eternity. It is the source of all power. In Sind the sun is still worshipped today as it has been for thousands of years.

The sun has long occupied a prominent place in the religious symbolism of Sind. The migration of people from the West brought an artistic tradition based on the sun of Baal, the Greek Itlios, and the sun worship of the Persians. The Rajputs, who were Hindus, were called Surajwansi.[154] The sun is also symbolic of fertility.[155] In popular religious beliefs and practices, the sun and the moon are considered symbols of permanent glory. The significance being that the glory of the image will last as long as the sun and the moon shine in the sky.[156] Sun, star and crescent moon are symbols of fertility.[157] Similarly, fish is also a symbol of fertility in our culture.[158]

(154) Bunting, Op. Cit, P. 26.

(155) Pearl Binder, Magic Symbols of the World, London, Hamlyn 1972, P. 17.

(156) Jyotinara Jain, *"Deities of Sun and Moon in Indian Mythology"*, an article published in Asian culture, No. 61, Spring 1982, No. 31, Tokyo, Asian Culture Centre for UNESCO, P. 8.

(157) See ref: 3, P. 18.

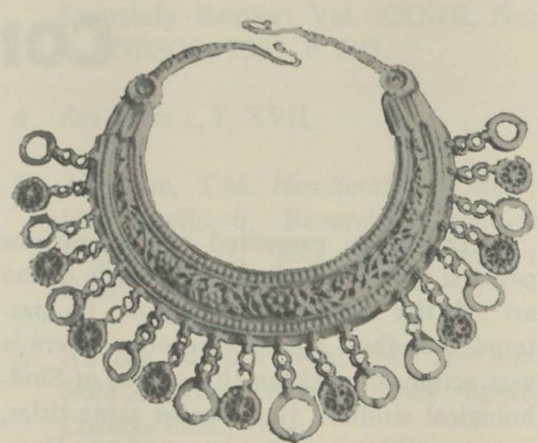
(158) Ibid, P. 17.

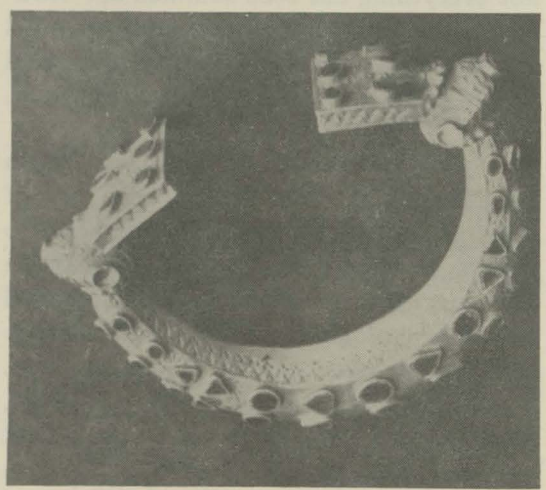
The swastika, or the armed cross, symbolizes the movement of the seasons. Turning clockwise, the Swastika is life-oriented fertility-granting auspicious and lucky, 'while' magic-making. The action of sowing seed is from left to right. Turning anti-clockwise, the Swastika is life – destroying, demonic, inauspicious and unlucky.

Ganesh, the Indian elephant-headed god, is the most popular of the many Hindu deities. It is the god of fortune, especially renowned for overcoming obstacles. He was originally a Dravidian rain god.

In the sub-continent jewellery comes before dress as a source of magic protection. Even the poorest Sindhi women wears some jewellery. A woman wears amulets, a nose-ring, heavy ear ornaments, several necklaces and breast amulets, and many bracelets and anklets, besides finger rings. The child wears a breast amulet, ear ornaments, bracelets, anklet and a magic protective genital ornament.

In Sind, we are able to identify the position of an artist among his people, his technique and his understanding of the work. We are able to study the basic ideas of his works. The sense and message which these pictures convey are closely connected to the social and economic conditions of the people of this region.







Conclusion

The study presented in the previous pages is only an outline to the study of the art of the Sind, its evolution, its patterns, and their significance etc. There is vast scope of work on this aspect of Sindhological studies. Here, under some titles, not everything has been summed up. However, some guidelines have been provided for scholars to conduct research in detail on the topics discussed in the present work.

Sind, as a matter of fact, is an "Open Air Museum". The visit of this part of Pakistan by any scholar, invites him/her to ponder in detail over the issues discussed in these pages. One can find a lot of material on anthropological, ethnological, sociological and archaeological studies of this area. A student of history, culture, sociology, anthropology, ethnology, etc. can collect sufficient information of interest. He can get sufficient material on the history of civilization, the history of culture, the influence of cultures of various immigrant races on the culture of the Indus Valley, the history of arts and crafts, archaeological history, geographical history, origin and evaluation of arts and crafts in the Indus Valley, its various patterns and motifs. However, as can be gathered from the present book, a detailed study cannot be undertaken under one title. A thorough and detailed description of every topic introduced/discussed in these pages, is needed.

The Indus Valley Civilization has a glorious past. Its culture has continued to the present day. The study of the culture of Sind therefore draws the attention of scholars to conduct research.

However, it appears from the contents of this work, that some introductory remarks have been made under each title, to enable the scholars/experts to work in detail on the points discussed in these pages.

The art of the Sind and its branches provide a very wide scope of study for scholars. The topics to be investigated by scholars are: whether the Indus Valley had its own School of Art; whether the art of this valley still reflects the tastes and desires of the people of the remotest areas of this valley.

The art of the Indus Valley reveals the character of its people. The choice of their colours indicate the development of their mind, their psychological taste and their approach to nature.

The art of Sind is really a very interesting field of study which has been introduced in these pages. This kind of introduction to the arts and crafts, its evolution, its patterns and motifs, the changes in patterns under the influence of different cultures etc., will really be a great service to Pakistan, and its people as a whole.

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116. See, Ref. No. 12. P. 17.

117. The Stone Slabs on which the earliest specimen of Calligraphy found in Sind at Bhambore, are lying in Bhambore Museum.

118. This stone has now been shifted to the Sind Museum at Hyderabad, Sind.

119. Hassan bin Rukunuddin earned fame as a calligrapher during the rule of Tarkhans. He was commissioned to write the Quranic and historical inscriptions on the tomb of Mirza Issa Khan Tarkhan. The latest inscription signed by him was the Quranic inscription on the Ceiling mosque of Shah Jehan at Thatta, dated 1068 A.H./1658 A.D.

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127. See, Ref: No. 40.

128. See, Ref: No. 31.

129. Ibid.

130. Ibid.

131. See, Ref. No. 40.

132. See, Ref. No. 29.

133. See, Ref: No. 16, P. 95.

134. See, Ref: No. 29.

135. See, Ref: No. 11.

136. See, Ref: No. 31.

137. See, Ref. No. 120, P. 24.

138. The Graves of this Graveyard are built of burnt brick .

139. See, Ref: No. 91, P. 165.

140. See Archaeological Survey of India.

141. See, Ref: No. 91, P. 24.

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ART OF SIND

Art of Sind is a pictorial history of different styles and art forms that have been practiced in Sind, through the centuries. The book initiates the reader to the subject and provides scholars with guidelines for conduction of indepth research into the cultural influences experienced by this province. The material is presented within an evolutionery framework. It traces the development of each art form within its social and cultural context.